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TES SCIENTIA VERITA





**AN APPEAL**  
TO  
**THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY,**  
ON THE  
**DISPUTED**  
**QUESTIONS OF THE TIMES :**  
IN  
**THREE LECTURES,**  
ON  
**THE DOCTRINE OF SACRAMENTAL EFFICACY,**  
**THE CLAIM OF APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION,**  
AND  
**THE UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE.**

**BY THE REV. JOHN ELY,**

**MINISTER OF SALEM CHAPEL, LEEDS.**

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*" Affertamus divinam stateram de scripturis sanctis, tanquam de thesauris dominicis et in illa  
quid sit gravior appendamus."*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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3 15 45 100 1  
THE following Discourses were delivered from the pulpit of Salem Chapel, in the month of January last. The Author has been induced to consent to their publication, by the same reasons as prompted their delivery: those reasons need not be repeated here, as they are fully stated in the introductory passages of the first lecture. Impressed with the importance of the questions at issue, and with a conviction of the truth of the views for which he contends, he has written in the spirit of deep sincerity and earnestness: he makes his appeal to the enlightened judgment and consciences of his readers; and only asks of them that they will peruse what he has written, in the spirit of ingenuousness and devotion. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

MSL

*Leeds, March 3d, 1838.*



# LECTURE I,

## ON THE

### DOCTRINE OF SACRAMENTAL EFFICACY.

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#### PHILIP. III. 3.

**"FOR WE ARE THE CIRCUMCISION, WHICH WORSHIP GOD IN THE SPIRIT, AND REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS, AND HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH."**

CHRISTIAN disciples are gathered, and christian communities are organized, not simply for their own personal benefit and social edification, but that they may become witnesses for the truth, and for their Lord and Saviour in the world. "Ye are the salt of the earth:" and your holy savour is to exert its influence on the mass. "Ye are the light of the world;" and your light is placed on a socket, whence it is to diffuse its illumination beyond the contracted space that immediately circumscribes its position, throughout the wider circle of society at large. You are "a city set on a hill:" and not only are the internal rights and immunities of the citizens to be guarded, but a fair exhibition of the great principles of your organization is to be made, before the eyes of every stranger that comes within the verge of your horizon.

As to christian communities, so to their ministers, pertains a character of public responsibility. Not only are they pastors of their particular flocks, but they have a commission also to the world, and they are "set for the defence of the gospel." "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." While they sedulously guard the communities committed to their immediate charge, they are vigilantly to observe all that passes in the region around them. They must lift up the voice and sound the alarm, as a warning to those who are beyond their own walls, as well as to those who are inclosed within them. "The trumpet" must give no "uncertain sound;" and though the alarm may offend some as obtrusive, and though others may regard it as the challenge of battle, while the great mass will refuse to hearken, deafened by the whirl of earthly engagement, or slumbering on the lap of voluptuousness, it is for the watchmen of Zion to acquit their consciences, "whether men will hear or whether

they will forbear." Nothing that transpires in the circle of religious profession can be foreign or indifferent to the christian minister ; no sacred truth can be undervalued. You know with what authority it was said, " Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

These are the impressions under which I have been induced to call your attention to certain questions, that are, at the present moment, exciting no small stir. In all the statements which I may make, and in all the arguments which I may advance, I wish to have to do with principles, not with men. I even feel it an advantage, that I stand before you quite free from that kind of bias, and that liability to personal reference, which would result from having heard with my own ears the avowal of those sentiments which I feel it my duty to combat. It is enough for me that the publication of such sentiments amid our population is matter of notoriety ; and however I may protest against the principles, I honour the candour and the manliness which have appeared in their avowal ; there has been no insidious, crooked policy pursued, by insinuation to inveigle the public mind. Equally ready am I to do honour to all those qualities which besem sacred office—the benevolent temperament, the assiduous pastorate, the laborious zeal, and the faithfulness which appears neither to truckle to greatness, nor to scorn poverty. I am quite disposed, moreover, to cherish the persuasion, that conscientious conviction, and direct intention are to be admitted, even in those avowals and in those courses which seem to me in themselves most to be deprecated. I am glad, therefore, I repeat, that I feel myself free from the danger of personal contest. My combat is with erroneous principle ; and I form my judgment of it by the help of those publications which have recently issued from a British university. Here I feel my ground to be safe and honourable. Here I feel that, without offensive personality, I may avow myself in strong terms. Here I take my stand ; and would warn the public of errors more fatal, I apprehend, in their bearings, than, from their mere enunciation, most of them are ready to suppose ; and I take my objection, not upon mere hearsay, not upon a mere oral statement which might be liable to be misapprehended, not upon my own interpretation of a doctrine, an interpretation liable of course to the warping influence of my own prepossessions,—but my impressions are taken from the exposition of the doctrines in question by Oxford divines,—doctrines, be it observed, which claim so unchangeable a character and so high an authority, that the exposition of the school must be regarded as a fair exposition of the views held by the individual members of that school. Towards *individuals* I desire to cherish only those dispositions which a christian spirit should inspire, and

which character may demand ; towards the *errors* of which I speak, I cherish no relentings, with them I can make no compromise, in reference to them I can enter into no truce. I pray to be directed by the spirit of wisdom, that wisdom which cometh from above, which combines unblenching firmness with all the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I pray for the promised teachings of God's Spirit, that, illuminated by him, I may not "darken counsel by words without knowledge." And I pray for his gracious influence, that truth may carry conviction, and that your hearts may be directed into the knowledge and love of God, by the instrumentality of the truth thus brought home to conviction.

In entering upon the brief course which I have marked out for myself, I propose to take up, in this first lecture, the doctrine of Sacramental Efficacy. As appropriate to this design, I have selected the passage, which has been already read, as my text. Certain Judaizing teachers had, it appears, been labouring to corrupt the simplicity of the Philippian believers, vaunting their canonical descent from Abraham, and their exact knowledge and observance of the Mosaic law,—agitating the minds of the christian disciples at Philippi, by enforcing the Mosaic ritual, and so endeavouring to divert their attention from Christ and spiritual religion, by exalting ceremonial. In warning the Philippians to beware of these men, terms of rebuke are employed by the Apostle, unusually strong and severe. And then, having designated their vaunted circumcision\* by an appellative indicating the fallacy of their vaunt, he proceeds to claim for the spiritual church the character of the *true* circumcision, consisting not in external badges but inward characteristics ; and with this he connects a solemn renunciation of all dependence on those outward badges. These few observations will at once bring out the significance and spirit of the text,—“We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

From these words, I shall take occasion to offer a brief statement of the Nature and Administration of Evangelical Religion,—I shall then proceed to examine the Doctrine of Sacramental Efficacy,—and finally, I shall warn you of the Consequences arising out of its maintenance.

I. Religion is a term describing the state of the mind towards God ; evangelical religion is a state of mind towards God, such as is required in the gospel of Jesus Christ. As honesty requires personal character and conduct to be conformed to the rule of right in reference to property ; as patriotism indicates a disposition operating in service cordially rendered for the good of country ; as morality refers to the virtuous habits of the life ; so religion affects character and conduct, operates in holy disposition and devotional service, and regards the graces of mind, in relation to the Supreme Being,—

\* They assumed to be the *νεκροτης*, the *circumcision* ; the apostle designates them the *κατακομινη*, the *excision*.

and evangelical religion is that peculiar modification of piety which is appropriate to sinners seeking mercy, and devoting themselves in holy consecration, to the God of salvation.

If this definition be admitted, you will be prepared for a brief summary descriptive of evangelical piety. The immutable basis of all religion must be love to God and obedience to his will. In these, sinners have failed; and it is the doctrine of scripture that all men are sinners, that our first parents' fall brought ruin on the whole race, and that it is now in the nature of fallen man to sin. The gospel reveals mercy to our sinful race,—and, inasmuch as love and obedience are reasonable requirements, the obligation of which cannot be relaxed,—the system of mediation has been devised, wherein the innocent voluntarily suffers the penalty due to the sinful, that his vicarious merit may be a ground of their righteous acceptance. The incarnation and death of the Lord Jesus, God's well-beloved Son, elevates this scheme to stupendous importance. It has none of the littleness of a mere expedient; mercy involves no compromise, and justice expresses nothing vindictive. An awful and an attractive display is made of love, transcendent love; and of unbending rectoral integrity. Evangelical religion inspires dispositions appropriate to such a manifestation of Deity. First, and indispensably necessary, is faith, believing the manifestation, and embracing the method of recovering mercy: inseparably connected with faith is repentance, the sister grace, twin sister with faith, acknowledging the desert of sin, self-renouncing and self-loathing, mourning the evil of offence against God: love is an immediate operation of faith, lowly, grateful, complacent love towards the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and towards the Saviour himself: a purifying influence is exerted by these inward principles, and sin is abhorred and gradually purged away: fellowship is sought with God,—prayer, holy song, devout meditation, ordinances of worship, are the delight of the soul: spirituality of mind takes place of worldliness, and victory is obtained over the world in its several forms of fascination and enslavement: active obedience is cheerfully rendered: submission to the divine will, and zeal for the divine glory, become the habit of life: and hope kindles with the prospect of immortal bliss in the presence of God and the Lamb.

You will, I conceive, be, most of you, quite prepared to receive these statements of the nature of evangelical religion. The next inquiry, then, respects the process by which such dispositions are wrought. And it is obvious that the instrument must be evangelical truth; whilst you will be equally disposed to grant, that the efficiency of truth is to be attributed to the operation of the Holy Spirit. Evangelical truth may be very variously presented,—in the sermon, in the printed page, in the maternal lesson, in the friendly conversation; but without a knowledge of “the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent,” there can be no evangelical faith, and

none of those operations of it on character and life which have been described. But since the mere intellectual perception of this system of truth is often found unaccompanied with these dispositions of mind ; since the mind is found, through its sinfulness, estranged from God, and indisposed to holy and devout exercises ; and since, on the other hand, innumerable instances present themselves of minds becoming thoroughly transformed by the efficient application of these truths, and that even after there had been long previous theoretic, but unavailing, knowledge of them—its efficacy must spring from an agency superior to the letter of truth ; and this is the agency of the Holy Spirit. He brings home conviction, subdues the estrangement of the mind and its consequent obduracy, renews the whole inward character, transforms the moral man : this is regeneration. “ Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” We are “ born of the Spirit,” and “ begotten through the gospel.” “ Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit ;—being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever :—and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”\*

As the truth, efficaciously applied by the Holy Spirit, is the instrument of regeneration, so it is the same truth, applied by the same agency, that is the instrument of sanctification. Its continued exhibition to the mind, followed by enlarged discernment of its significance, and augmenting verification of it, serves to deepen and establish holy disposition, and gives fuller development to holy character. Hence our Lord’s prayer for his disciples, “ Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth.”†

In conformity with the nature of evangelical religion is that administration of its services and blessings, which is instituted by the authority of its Supreme Head. That administration, having ever in view the promotion of the great ends which we have seen the gospel is designed to effect, is adapted to impart the knowledge and promote the influence of evangelical truth. The word of God is the depository of truth ; and to this is our ultimate appeal. The preaching of the gospel is the institute of the Lord Jesus, in which an intelligible, convincing, persuasive exhibition is to be made of the great doctrines of remission and repentance through the suffering and exaltation of the Saviour. The regular ministration of evangelical instruction is ordained “ for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The pastorate is appointed for the vigilant, active, faithful oversight of the flock. And certain positive institutes are added to furnish symbolic instruction ; and these are designated ordinarily, but not scripturally, sacraments.

The positive institutions of the evangelical system are few and simple ; and they are peculiarly characterised by their intelligible nature. The

\* Jas. i. 18. ; John iii. 8. ; 1 Cor. iv. 15 ; 1 Peter i. 22, 23, 25. † John xvii. 17.

Christian minister is set apart by prayer, and the imposition of hands,—a rite significant of his special designation. The Lord's Day partakes in part of the nature of a positive institute, the first day of the week being that selected one among the seven, in which the achievement of the redeeming work was to be commemorated. The two institutions that we are wont to designate sacraments, partake of a similar character; they convey instruction by symbol, and obedience to them is the expression of our subjection to Christ and our faith in his promises. Baptism is a rite, in which water, applied to the body, becomes the symbol of spiritual cleansing by the agency of the Holy Ghost: received by the adult convert whether from Judaism or Heathenism, it is the outward sign of his subjection to the discipline of the gospel, and of his humble faith in a covenanted, triune Jehovah; and administered to the infant, it is expressive of the parent's dependence on the promise made to his offspring, and of his determination to train up his child in subjection to the same discipline,—while it comprises a symbolic lesson enforcing the indispensable necessity of an inward cleansing: “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The Lord's Supper has for its elements, bread and wine, symbols of the body and blood of the Redeemer, and is strictly an ordinance of remembrance. These visible symbols come in aid of written and oral instruction. To participate aright, there must be faith to discern the hallowed instruction; the sacred Supper is to be eaten in remembrance of the Lord's death; it is an act of social intercourse; and it is the peculiar privilege of the believing community, whose members are recognised as saints, and their society organised as a church of Christ. Hence baptism is designated “a figure,” an antitype,\* an analagous symbol, by the apostle Peter, who specially guards us from misapprehension, saying,—“not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” And our Lord in one solemn injunction marks the character of the sacred supper, when he says, “This do in remembrance of me.”†

In giving these statements, I have been anxious to offer a representation at once luminous and concise, sustaining my statements by brief scripture reference, rather than arguing at length in support of them. I may appeal to you if the administration of evangelical religion be not, allowing that such are its ordinances and institutes, in harmony with its nature and objects. To instruct, to convince, to persuade, to impress,—and so to work the dispositions in which we have seen that the operations of evangelical religion consist,—these are the objects of all ordinances. And such is the view that harmonises with the text,—“We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

\* 1 Peter iii. 21. *τυπος*. † 1 Cor. xi. 24.

II. A very different account of these divine institutes is now to occupy our attention. An efficacy is claimed for the sacraments, apart from the reception of instruction by them, or the exercise of faith, in their observance. The material elements are supposed to receive a new and mystical character, and, when administered by rightful authority, to work a change in the state of the party to whom they are administered. They are regarded as vehicles of grace, not by the symbolic instructions they convey, but by a virtue imparted to them through priestly benediction. . Baptismal water, applied by a sacred functionary, who is supposed to hold an apostolic commission, through episcopal ordination,—baptismal water so applied, is said to regenerate, to convey grace to the soul; and, it is asserted that sacramental bread and wine, when duly consecrated, impart Christ to the soul. You will perceive, that much is involved in this doctrine, besides the impartation of grace by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. A sacramental character is attributed to the ministry; ordinances even of devotion and instruction are made to derive their efficacy, not so much from the spirit of devotion, or the truth conveyed, as from the sacred power of the ministry; new sacraments are virtually created,—absolution is an authoritative, priestly act,—matrimony is valid, as it is sanctioned by priestly benediction,—the very dead receive some mystic benefit from the priestly ritual.

In making these statements in my own words, I have not put an interpretation on the doctrine containing any thing like an exaggeration; and to convince you of this, I shall proceed to quote the language of an authority which is admitted by the whole school. "This," it is asserted, "has been the notion of the whole Christian Church, that the Sacraments are not bare signs, but do convey that also which they signify."\* Again, "the Sacraments are channels of divine grace to the soul, which are closed up indeed by unfaithfulness, yet are efficacious, not simply by animating our faith; but the one, by actually incorporating us into CHRIST, and creating in our souls a new principle of life, and making us 'partakers of the Divine nature;' the other, imparting to us increased union with CHRIST, and (to use the term of the Fathers) a deifying influence, whereby GOD gives us that which man would have accepted from Satan—to 'be as Gods,' being partakers of the SON of GOD." According to these statements, you perceive that Sacraments are regarded not as mere outward signs, but as the very vehicles of grace; and that they are said to operate, not through the convictions of the mind, or the dispositions of the heart, but by an occult power attending their ministration. Intelligence, faith, feeling, are unnecessary,—a mystic spell is pronounced, a charm is administered,—and, without any moral or religious effect, the soul is consecrated.

Such seems the natural inference from the representations which have

\* Oxford Tracts, No. 68. p. 83.

† No. 69. p. 114.

been exhibited to you. Yet I confess, I should hesitate long before I should venture to deduce the inference, and to impute such consequences, did I not find them roundly asserted by the same authority. Thus is the idea of a moral influence repudiated:—"For if men conceive of Sacraments as external symbols, and acting through a moral operation by representing to our souls the greatness of His (the Saviour's) love, His humiliation, His sufferings, and thus kindling our faith, and thereby uniting us with Him; then, and much more, will all the operations of the HOLY SPIRIT be resolved into the presenting to the mind outward motives; and His sanctifying influence will become as merely external, nay, far more so, than the ministration of what men call 'the outward word.'"<sup>\*</sup> If, then, these ordinances do not act by moral influence, what is the operation but a spell? And if the influence of moral motive is merely external, what is truth, what is the Gospel applied by Him "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," when the one becomes an inward illumination, and the other "a savour of life unto life?"<sup>†</sup> Hear once more the strong and unhesitating language, in which the consequences, which have been attributed to these views of sacramental efficacy, are asserted by their advocates:—"There are those whose 'word will eat as doth a canker;' and it is to be feared that we have been over-near certain celebrated Protestant teachers, Puritan or Latitudinarian, and have suffered in consequence. Hence we have almost embraced the doctrine, that God conveys grace only through the instrumentality of the mental energies, that is, through faith, prayer, active spiritual contemplations, or (what is called) communion with God, in contradiction to the primitive view, according to which the Church and her Sacraments are the ordained and direct visible means of conveying to the soul what is in itself supernatural and unseen. For example, would not most men maintain, on the first view of the subject, that to administer the LORD's Supper to infants, or to the dying and insensible, however consistently pious and believing in their past lives, was a superstition? and yet both practices have the sanction of primitive usage. And does not this account for the prevailing indisposition to admit that Baptism conveys regeneration? Indeed, this may even be set down as the essence of Sectarian Doctrine, (however its mischief may be restrained or compensated, in the case of individuals,) to consider faith, and not the Sacraments, as the instrument of justification and other gospel gifts; instead of holding, that the grace of CHRIST comes to us altogether from without, (as from Him, so through externals of His ordaining,) faith being but the *sine qua non*, the necessary condition on our parts for duly receiving it."<sup>‡</sup> After this, you will think it no great dishonour to be ranked among secta-

<sup>\*</sup> Oxford Tracts, No. 69. p. 126.      † 2 Cor. iv. 6. and chap. ii. 14—16.

‡ Oxford Tracts, Vol. ii. preface, pp. v. vi.

rians; for your Bible no where speaks of your being justified through sacraments, but it speaks every where of justification as being through faith. Call that faith the instrument, or the *sine qua non*, the necessary condition,—it is to him who is its subject that justification is reckoned. But the doctrine of sacramental efficacy not only refuses to *faith* the instrumentality of justification, but supersedes the instrumentality of *truth*: the illumination of truth is unnecessary, if sacraments, not by the lessons they symbolically teach, but by a mystic virtue apart from their symbolic use, convey grace to the soul.

Having given you the statement of this doctrine in the very words of the parties who hold it, I may now proceed to examine it by the word of God.

Is baptismal regeneration a doctrine of that word? Strange it is that our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus should be relied on as a main foundation of this notion. In that conversation\* our Lord said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What is the natural interpretation of this expression? Is it that we are regenerated in nature by the water of baptism? Or is it not obvious, that a figurative, and a real, regeneration are spoken of, one exhibiting a symbol visible and external, and the other a reality which is invisible and inward?—Are the water and the Spirit joint agents of the same work? Or is the water the instrument of the Spirit's agency? The former cannot be admitted, even on the principles of the parties in question; and the latter is not admissible by the laws of interpretation, while it is contradicted by the tenor of the context. But admit that the water is a *symbol*, and the application of it an external sign of an inward work; and that to be born of the Spirit is a reality, involving a spiritual change by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost,—and the whole matter becomes clear. Ye must become new men—by water, that is by outward profession—and by the Spirit, that is, by inward transformation. And then dwelling on the divine transformation as the one thing, without which the outward profession would be worthless, the Saviour goes on to contrast being born of the flesh with being born of the Spirit, and so enforces his reiterated declaration, "Ye must be born again." A parallel passage will show how essential the believing reception of Christ is, as connected with the new birth, while there is no allusion whatever to the necessity of water baptism: "But as many as received him (the Incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus,) to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."† The last negative would exclude baptism; for since baptism is an ordinance administered by the will of man, if it regenerates, the text is contradicted.

\* John iii. 1, &c.

† John i. 12, 13.

It will be seen how a similar exegesis applies to other sacred passages, in which regeneration by the Spirit, is spoken of in connexion with the washing of water. I shall only refer you further to our Lord's commission, and the apostolic fulfilment of that commission. This is the commission,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”\* What is the natural sense of this commission? Is it not this,—that the gospel is a message to be believed; that faith is to be betokened by baptism; that faith is the great reality without which damnation is incurred, and that baptism is the outward sign, and therefore ineffective without the reality; where there is no faith, there is condemnation,—where there is faith, there is the obligation of conformity to the symbolic ordinance. In strict accordance with this view of our Lord's commission, is the history of his apostles' course: they preached the gospel, faith was wrought, and baptism was administered: their rejoinder to the cry, “What must I do to be saved?” was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;” and baptism followed belief, the believer yielding himself and his household to the instituted rite. If baptismal water had possessed the awful power of regeneration, then they should have been eager to administer it; but so far was this from being the case, that they, having preached the gospel, committed to others the office of administering baptism. Paul could say to the Corinthians, “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel;” hence he could make his appeal, “Am I not an apostle?—are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” Now is not this a clear assertion that their renewal, that the very work by which they were introduced into the spiritual kingdom, was effected by his instrumentality through the gospel? But if so, they were not regenerated by baptism; and so inferior an importance did he attach to that symbolic, though obligatory rite, that he disavowed having generally administered it among them. “I thank God,” he says, “that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; I baptized also the household of Stephanus, besides I know not whether I baptized any other: for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.”† Is this the language of a man who believed baptismal regeneration? Is not this a practical comment on the apostolic commission? Is baptismal regeneration, then, a scripture doctrine? Verily, I am almost ashamed seriously to argue the point, for I am ready to think you will suppose me to be trifling with you, in assuming it necessary to put a single argument, in a case so obvious.

Let us apply ourselves next to that other standing ordinance, to which the

\* Mark xvi. 15, 16.   † Compare 1 Cor. iv. 15, and ix. 1, 2, with i. 14—17.

name of Sacrament has been attached,—the Lord's Supper. The modern advocates of sacramental efficacy deny the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation; nor do they profess the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation: but they assert that the consecrated elements of bread and wine are more than a figurative representation of the Saviour's body and blood. Quoting as authority the words of a Bishop of their church, they say, "the Bread and Wine—are solemnly consecrated by the words of CHRIST, that by them his blessed body and blood may be communicated to us." "For the Body and Blood of our SAVIOUR are not only fitly represented by the Elements, but also, by virtue of His institution really offered to all, by them, and so eaten by the faithful mystically and sacramentally; whence it is, that "He truly is and abides in us, and we in Him."\* Many such passages might be produced; but all proceed on the principle that ministers, holding apostolic commission, have a power of effecting a change in the elements, by which they assume a new and sacred character, and that this change is effected by the words of consecration. The question turns upon the significance of the phrase in which the ministerial act is exhibited—"blessing" the elements. Two of the Evangelists state that our Lord "*blessed*" the bread; and an apostle argues, "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" But the phrase in question is obviously synonymous with *giving thanks*: for so is the Saviour's act described in two out of the four records given us of the institution of the Lord's Supper, in reference to the bread;† and this is the only phrase employed in those records, in reference to the cup.‡ Thus are the terms interchangeably applied to that act of devotion, performed by our Lord when he fed the multitudes in the wilderness; he performed a similar act in reference to the paschal cup; and thus when he sat down to the evening meal at Emmaus, "he took bread and blessed it."§ Can it be necessary to offer another remark on this matter? Is there scripture warrant for this doctrine? Does not the argument which goes to support it, go still more to support transubstantiation? Is there a *via media*, a middle way, between the simple notion of a symbolic institute, acting as an affecting remembrancer, and the mystic one of the transmutation of the elements and the manducation of the very body and blood of the Saviour? If that mystic, sacramental presence is there,—elevate the paten,—bow the knee,—offer the sacrifice of the mass,—eat the flesh of the victim! but then the communion is no longer a spiritual service—it is a carnal ordinance.

I touch not on the wider bearing of this question, as it implies a sacra-

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 27, pp. 1, 2.

† Compare Matt. xxvi. 26, and Mark xiv. 22, with Luke xxii. 19, and 1 Cor. xi. 24.

‡ Compare 1 Cor. x. 16, with Matt. xxvi. 27, Mark xiv. 23.

§ Compare Matt. xiv. 19, with xv. 36, and John vi. 11. See also Luke xxii. 17, and xxiv. 30.

mental character in the ministry, and in all ministerial acts; because I shall have occasion to refer to this subject, when I come to speak of the claim of apostolic succession, and priestly character and efficacy.

III. I take now more general ground, and desire to warn you of the Consequences involved in the doctrine of Sacramental Efficacy.

1. It overlays, and so virtually nullifies, the great doctrine of mediation.

I have selected this term, overlays, because I wish to avoid any imputation, which should seem to charge on the advocates of the doctrine, a denial of the mediatorial work and offices. The mediation, the supreme divinity, the atoning death, of Christ, they maintain; and that with distinguished ability and zeal: With these great doctrines, they retain the substance of truth; and where essential truth is, there is the instrument of life and salvation. Better is it to find vital truth, though for the most part obscured and too widely ineffective through errors and superstitions which overlay it, than to have to do with systems that consist in a negation of all the great verities of the gospel. Rome herself may number among her children not only her Fenelons and her Blaise Pascals, but many a lowly one whose faith embraces the cross. Amid stoled priests, and fuming incense, and genuflexions before the mass, and the pantomimes of Christmas and Easter celebrations, in which the cradle and the cross are produced in effigy, there may be a discernment of sin, of atonement, of salvation; and truth may find its access to the heart. Give me Papal Rome, rather than modern Geneva; Popery, rather than Neology. Better had they kiss the crucifix, than deny the cross. When they have taken away the divinity and atonement of the Lord Jesus, what have they left us? I shudder with apprehension when I hear that the announcement of Christ crucified has been followed by the doctrine of sacramental efficacy; but I am chilled with despondency when I hear that Christ crucified has been treated as a common and unholy thing. I grieve when I see men directed to find the blood of Christ in the consecrated chalice; but I am shocked beyond measure when I see that blood trampled under foot.

I am happy to have so much to concede; but having made this concession, I must, with unfeigned regret that such occasion should exist, charge the doctrine of sacramental efficacy with the criminal enormity of stifling the vital truth which it presupposes. It asserts the mediation of Christ, wherein, as a divine but incarnate Saviour, he first made atonement, and now makes intercession, for sinners; but then, forthwith, it declares that the virtue of his atonement is transferred to sacraments,—that it is not faith in him that justifies, but the administration of sacraments,—and that earthly ministers have power to dispense the benefits of his salvation. With the ancient Quaker error, they turn off your eyes from an external Christ and an external atonement, while they carnalize,—a grossness utterly foreign to the Quaker doctrine,—the notion of Christ crucified within, making it to consist,

not in a spiritual nature, but in a bodily participation. The apostles preached Christ crucified ; these men preach baptism, as imparting Christ. St. Gregory of Nazianzum puts these words into the mouth of the baptized, as a reply to the tempter : “ I am clothed with CHRIST, I am changed by baptism into CHRIST, ‘ worship thou me.’ ” The same redoubted saint says, when urging the baptism of the infant, “ IMPART TO HIM THE TRINITY, that great and excellent preservative.” And what do the sacramentarian divines say to this ? This is their comment :—“ The thrill which those impressive words, ‘ impart to him the Trinity,’ (*δος αυτη την Τριαδα*) echoing to us after fourteen hundred years, still awaken in us, may well make us admire the energy of the faith, which infused into words so simple a force so amazing.”\* You, also, if I mistake not, thrilled at these words, but yours was the thrill of a holy horror and indignation. Impart the Trinity ! impart the Trinity with those mortal hands ! impart the Trinity by sacramental water ! Who then is the true mediator but the priest ? and what is the true act of mediation but the administration of that same sacrament ? And so in the supper of the Lord, if by consecrating and giving the bread, the minister imparts the body of Christ,—if by consecrating and giving the cup, he imparts the blood of Christ,—so that hereby “ He truly is and abides in us and we in him,” then the minister administers the benefits of mediation, and the sacrament of the supper comprises all the virtues of that mediation. O this is to take the material cross and make it a *Nehush-tan* ; this is to spread the heraldic cross as a banner, and under it to fight against the Lamb ; this is to bring down the Lamb from the efficient offices of mediation in the midst of the throne, and to immolate him again upon the altar, while a human priest presents his blood to God, and authoritatively imparts his merit to man.

Did I say too much, then, when I said that this figment of sacramental efficacy overlays, and so nullifies, the great doctrines of mediation ? Who is the actual mediator ?—The administrator of sacraments. What is the true atonement ?—The cleansing sacrament of baptism. What is the ground of justification ?—The sacrament of the eucharist. What is the preacher’s theme ?—Sacraments. What is the proper object of the creature’s faith ?—Sacraments. What is all and in all in the scheme of these parties ?—Sacraments. Ah, they have taken the crown of mediation from the head of the Lord Jesus,—and what more can they do ?

2. A second warning I ground on the debasing influence which this doctrine must exert, in reference to the spirituality of religion.

The ancient economy is put in contrast with the evangelical dispensation, inasmuch as it was a system of carnal ordinances : but I fear the contrast must be reversed, if the principles in question be admitted. According to

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 69, pp. 185, 178.

these, the ordinances of the law were simply signs and seals, while the ceremonial institutions of the gospel are the very instruments of salvation; and surely on these principles, the former was the more spiritual system. If positive and ceremonial ordinances have so superior an efficacy under the gospel, the gospel has less of spirituality, and more of the nature of an outward ordinance. It is a system which requires of you to reverse all such statements as these: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men;" "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God;" "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith; for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love:" "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature:" "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all and in all."\* What is the purport of passages such as these, passages descriptive of the genius of the new economy, but that the evangelical dispensation is characterized by an intelligible, spiritual character, in which ceremonial and outward ordinances have a very subsidiary place? And yet if sacraments be what they have been pronounced by them who ascribe to them a saving efficacy, the gospel must be preeminently a system of ceremonial.

A rapid glance at some of the bearings of this doctrine will sustain the position under consideration. If every baptized child is regenerate, what is the state of the rising community? Is it a state of depravity? Is the child no longer by nature dead, by the carnal mind enmity to God, by natural blindness incapable of discerning the things of God? If not, then natural depravity, at least in its inveteracy, is counteracted from infancy; and where is the need of pardon, of conversion, of salvation? Then not only may we expect that prodigals will be no more found in the land, but the Nicodemuses will soon all vanish away; and you may cease to preach, "ye must be born again." As depravity was so early purged by the water of baptism,—the depth of repentance, the earnestness of faith, the experience of inward change, are superseded. And since ordinances both regenerate and sanctify, and that mystically and sacramentally, not by invigorating faith or exciting moral disposition, the statement of the gospel must be of secondary importance, the act of faith in Christ is rather desirable than necessary, and holy affections are not comparable with an exact observance of ritual. Ritual is placed above holy affections; and a Saviour's merits,

\* Rom. xiv. 17, 18.—1 Cor. vii. 19.—Gal. v. 5, 6.—vi. 15. Coloss. iii. 10. 11.

which those affections regard, are equally underrated. Thus speaks the oracle of the party : "The pardon in Baptism is free, full, instantaneous, universal, without any service on our part ; the pardon on repentance for those who have forfeited their baptismal pardon, is slow, partial, gradual :—man desires to have, under any circumstances, certainty of salvation through Christ ; to those who have fallen" (that is from baptismal grace) " God holds out only ' a light in a dark place ;'—man would forestall the sentence of his Judge ; the Romanist, by the *Sacrament* of penance ; a modern class of divines, by the appropriation of the merits and righteousness of our Blessed Redeemer ; the Methodists, by sensible experience : our own, with the ancient Church, preserves a reverent silence, not cutting off hope, and yet not nurturing an untimely confidence, or a presumptuous security."\* You see how your

\* The following extracts from the Tract for the Times, entitled, *VIA MEDIA* No. II. will show that the writers have no wish to vindicate themselves from the charge of lowering the spirituality of religion. Clericus and Laicus are the parties in the Dialogue.

"C. We are more Protestant than our Reformers. \* \* I will use it (the term Protestant) in the sense most apposite to the topics we have been discussing ; viz. as the religion of so-called freedom and independence, as hating superstition, suspicious of forms, jealous of priestcraft, advocating heart-worship ; characteristics which admit of a good or a bad interpretation, but which, understood as they are instanced in the majority of persons who are zealous for what is called Protestant doctrine, are (I maintain) very inconsistent with the Liturgy of our Church. \* \* Is it not certain that a modern Protestant, even though he granted that children were regenerated in Baptism, would, in the Confirmation Service, have made them some address about the necessity of spiritual renovation, of becoming new creatures, &c. ? I do not say such warning is not appropriate ; nor do I propose to account for our Church's not giving it ; but is it not quite certain that the present *prevailing* temper in the Church, would have given it, judging from the prayers and sermons of the day, and that the Liturgy does not ? Were that day like this, would it not have been deemed formal and cold, and deficient in spiritual-mindedness, to have proposed a declaration such as has been actually adopted, that ' to the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can *say* the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments,' &c. ; nothing being said of a change of heart or spiritual affections ? \* \* Take again the Catechism. \* \* Why is there no mention of newness of heart, of appropriating the mercies of redemption, and such like phrases, which are now common among so-called Protestants ? Why no mention of justifying faith ? L. Faith is mentioned in an earlier part of the Catechism. C. Yes, and it affords a remarkable contrast to the modern use of the word. Nowadays, the *prominent* notion conveyed by it regards its properties, whether spiritual or not, warm, self-renouncing. But in the Catechism, the *prominent* notion is that of its *object*, the believing *all* the *Articles* of the Christian faith. \* \* L. The Creed is also introduced into the service for Baptism. C. And still more remarkably in the order for Visiting the Sick ; \* \* a modern Protestant \* would rather have instituted some more searching examination (as he would call it) of the state of the sick man's heart ; whereas the whole of the minister's exhortation is what the modern school calls cold and formal. \* \* Not a word of looking to CHRIST, resting on Him, and renovation of heart. Such are the expressions which modern Protestantism would have considered necessary, and would have inserted as such. They are good words ; still they are not those which our Church considers *the* words for a sick-bed examination. \* \* She adopts a manner of address which savours of what is now called formality."

Such is the argument, often cautiously guarded by saving clauses, yet broadly stated, to shew that modern Protestantism demands a spirituality and a warmth, not required by the

dependence on the Redeemer's righteousness, and your inward experience, are estimated in comparison with sacraments.

Oh! observe the influence of the system,—how it debases religion, lowering its spirituality and resolving it into ceremonial! The grace conveyed to you by baptism would seem to be a gift, affecting your relative position, rather than exciting spiritual affections. The heart renewed from infancy, needs little sorrow for sin. Implicit submission to ordinances justifies, while faith in Christ is a minor consideration. Godliness consists far more in punctual observance of positive institutes, than in the habit of holy dispositions. Devotion does not so much consist in mental acts, as in bodily service. Dying hours, though passed in insensibility, may be rendered hallowed, by swallowing sacramental bread and wine. The gate of heaven will fly open, if the sign of the cross be on the brow; and the body will be secure for a glorious resurrection, if the mystic elements of the supper be incorporated with it. The text must be reversed: 'we are the circumcision, who honour God with bodily service, and who, instead of boasting in Christ Jesus, put confidence in carnal ordinances.'

3. I warn you, finally, that this doctrine is one which brings souls into imminent danger.

Here is a resting place for those who stumble at the doctrine of Christ,—and O what ceremonial will not men undergo, what sacrifice will they not make, what sufferings will they not endure, if they may but thereby establish a righteousness to justify them! Their pride revolts when you tell them, "only believe;" but set them about some great thing, give them a religion of multiplied services, and they will cheerfully perform them all, for the sake of entitling themselves to life and salvation. Then the spirituality of religion is not less repugnant to the heart of man: a religion of intellectual speculation, a religion of sentiment and taste, a religion of ritual—anything rather than a religion of devout dispositions, he will choose. I think of human nature thus characterized; I think of it in some particular locality, where a hundred thousand individuals are concentrated; I think of that mass as having, in various directions, heard of the doctrines, of salvation, not always perhaps in the clearest, fullest manner, but the trumpet, though its tones may not in every instance have been very clear, has sounded; I think

Reformers. The evangelical members of the Episcopal Church will, no doubt, be as anxious to vindicate the offices and services of the Prayer Book from the charge of formality, as the sacramentarian Divines are to prove that in that formality its excellence consists. This is a dispute to be adjusted between themselves. But that the desire of putting heart-searching questions, and exciting warm affections in the child, in the communicant, in the dying man, should be deprecated as an innovation, is sufficiently characteristic. The limits of a foot-note demanded abridgment,—and scrupulous care has been exercised so to abridge the extracts, as to insert whatever might qualify the very remarkable statements of the Tract in question. Fuller extracts would have presented many instances, which the reader would probably have deemed still more characteristic of a dread of warmth and spirituality.

of the people, as having generally some impression that religion is a personal thing, involving acts of faith and dispositions of holiness, and yet disposed to put away the intrusive intimation of its importance: and then I verify the introduction of that doctrine of which I am speaking. O how it calms their misgivings! How it lulls their fears! How it soothes them into slumber again! There is a movement; but it is the rush of the people to the baptismal font that supersedes their anxiety for the cleansing of Jerusalem's fountain,—it is the thronging of the people about an altar where a priest dispenses atonement. A cup of enchantment is held forth; they wonder,—they drink of it,—excitement is the immediate effect of the draught,—but ultimately it will prove to be an opiate, sealing them in seven-fold slumber! A whisper there was in conscience, “ye must be born again;” but the preacher came and said, “ye were born again in baptism.” There was an uneasiness under the dread of not being in Christ; the pastor offers him in the sacrament. There was a sense of guilt; the priest absolves the sinner. There was a conviction of obligation to cherish spiritual dispositions; the administrator of ordinances says, ‘observe the canon and the rubric.’ There was a fear of death; the sacerdotal hand is there with the viaticum!

And do you profess your dread at the growth of Popery, and turn pale at the robe dyed scarlet in the blood of saints, and fright yourselves at the identification of apocalyptic beasts and the papal church? And if the grand delusions of the Romish church come under an Anglican name; and if, not martyrdom is threatened, but souls are endangered; and if the very patent of priestly office is held of the papal church; shall there be no alarm? Must we conclude, then, that the alarm was but a political apprehension? If it was jealousy for religion,—if it was solicitude for souls,—if it was dread of encroaching error,—then who does not know that sacramental efficacy was the very spell of Rome? and surely the substance is as much to be dreaded, to say the least, without the name—as is the avowal of such doctrines, under the name, of papacy! It becomes the true friends of the gospel to adopt a decisive tone, to lift up a loud protest,—and none so much as those that are within the pale of the church with which Oxford is connected.

I have done. I pursue the question no further. But I have one solemn duty to perform ere I sit down. I have spoken of souls as endangered, and I must remind you that the whole case has been treated as one deriving its importance from the worth and jeopardy of souls. You may be orthodox; you may be far enough removed from dependence on ordinances: but without faith in Christ, and a new birth, you cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. The minding of the flesh is no preparation for heaven. No early baptism could purge your hearts from enmity to God. If you have not faith in Christ, the dread sentence stands against you unobliterated, and

without faith it never will be obliterated,—“He that believeth not shall be damned.” I proclaim to you one only Saviour,—one great atoning sacrifice. I proclaim a “righteousness, which is unto all and upon all them that believe.” I proclaim eternal life in Christ Jesus. Ah! there are many ways to perdition; there is only one to heaven! Voluptuousness, worldliness, neglect, conduct to perdition; faith, looking to Christ as a Saviour crucified for sin, is indeed the *sine qua non*, and the *only* necessary condition of salvation—a condition not of merit, but involving in its very nature the renunciation of merit.—You came not for a personal appeal perhaps; but why should I waste a syllable on the evening’s question—except for the honour of my Master and the good of souls? and if such be my aim, can I suffer you to go away without appeal? I cannot but warn, and exhort, and beseech you. The publications to which I have so often referred, furnish me with a warning against procrastination, in the words of one whom they have canonized as a saint, Augustine. Wouldst thou not “burn in everlasting fire,” let me warn thee “against that raven-like repetition, *cras! cras!*” i. e. to-morrow, to-morrow! “that raven,” he adds, “whose voice thou” (in thy procrastination) “imitatest, departed out of the ark, and returned not.” I dare not procrastinate in personal warning—for another sabbath, and my hearers’ ears may be stopped for ever. You must not procrastinate—for ere another sabbath you may be beyond the reach of warning and exhortation. “You must be born again.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.” AMEN.

# LECTURE II.

## ON THE

### CLAIM OF APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

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#### 1 COR. III. 5.

“WHO THEN IS PAUL, AND WHO IS APOLLOS, BUT MINISTERS BY WHOM YE BELIEVED, EVEN AS THE LORD GAVE TO EVERY MAN ?”

No man better understood how to vindicate the dignity of his office than the Apostle Paul ; yet no man was more ready to forego the personal honours to which it entitled its possessor, for the sake of those great objects for which it was conferred. When error insinuated itself, or the order of the church was endangered by those who pretended to be ministers of Christ, he hesitated not to assert his apostolical commission, and to claim the authority which it imparted. When invidious comparisons were made, he was prepared to show the full equality of his claims with those of the chiefest apostles. When injurious imputations were employed to lower his authority and diminish his usefulness, he shrunk not, through a morbid modesty, from an enumeration of his labours, his sufferings, and his successes. On such occasions he could speak in the most decisive tone ; of the many examples that might be adduced, the following may be taken as a specimen :—“ We have the mind of Christ ;” “ Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God ;” “ Am I not an apostle ?—have not I seen Jesus Christ our Lord ?” “ I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles ;” “ In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing ; truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds ;” “ He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles ;” “ I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

In all this there was nothing vaunting, nothing arrogant. His Master's honour, the maintenance of truth, the salvation of souls, were his objects ; and so that these were promoted, he was indifferent to all considerations of

personal interest. He could bear reproach and contempt, he could shrink into insignificance, he could endure the loss of personal attachment even in the case of his own converts,—if he did but see the work of holiness promoted. He was ready to own the humblest as his fellow labourer; and even when the motive of zeal was rivalry, he could exult that zeal was put forth in the ministration of truth, and in the service of the church. Harken once more to the strain in which he addressed the churches:—"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved;" "Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife, and some also of good will; the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel: what then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice:" "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase; so then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." It is in immediate connexion with these last words that the evening's text occurs, a text well adapted, I conceive, to express the spirit of the apostolic ministry;—"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

The subject proposed for examination this evening is a claim which will be found, I apprehend, little in accordance with the spirit of the text, or the deportment of the apostle,—**THE CLAIM OF APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION** made on behalf of the clergy of the Episcopal Church, established by law in this kingdom. This claim has long been held in abeyance. Its revival at the present juncture has something of a chivalrous character in it, for its champions take up arms against the temper of the times. It is essential to the doctrine of sacramental efficacy, and the disciples of that doctrine have been its principal advocates: but I am afraid that its advocacy has not been confined to them; and greatly to be lamented will it be, if evangelical men should be found fascinated by its influence.

In proceeding to lay before you a statement of the claim, I shall adopt the course pursued in the previous lecture, adducing the explanations of the lofty assumption furnished by the parties who make it,—and adducing them from the same source.

The very first Tract of the Series issued by certain members of the University of Oxford, purporting to be an address of a clergyman to his brethren on their ministerial commission, expressly declares "the real ground of" their "authority" to be their "apostolical descent;" and thus he explains himself,—“We have been born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Lord Jesus Christ gave His Spirit to His apostles; they in turn laid their hands on those who should succeed them; and these again on others; and so the sacred gift has

been handed down to our present Bishops, who have appointed us as their assistants, and in some sense representatives." "I know," he adds, "the grace of ordination is contained in the laying on of hands;—we have confessed before God our belief, that through the Bishop who ordained us, we received the Holy Ghost, the power to bind and to loose, to administer the sacraments, and to preach."\*

In another Tract of the same series, the clergyman is represented as thus addressing his parishioners :—"We must honour the Bishop,—for his *office*-sake;—because he is Christ's Minister, stands in the place of the Apostles, is the Shepherd of our souls on earth, while CHRIST is away. This is FAITH, to look at things not as seen, but as unseen; to be as sure that the Bishop is CHRIST's appointed Representative, as if we actually saw him work miracles as St. Paul and St. Peter did, as you may read in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.—But you will say, how do we know this, since we do not see it? I repeat, the Bishops are Apostles to us, from their *witnessing* CHRIST, and *suffering* for Him.—They witness our LORD in their very *name*, for he is the true Bishop of our souls, as St. Peter *says*, and they are Bishops. They witness CHRIST in their *station*;—there is but one LORD to save us, and there is but one Bishop in each place. The *meetings*"—(this, be it observed, is a designation by which the frequenters of dissenting chapels, or meeting-houses, are distinguished in certain circles, in the southern provinces of this kingdom,) "the *meetings* have no head, they are all of them mixed together in a confused way; but we of CHRIST's Holy Church (blessed be God!) have one Bishop over us, and our Bishop is the Bishop of ——. Many of you have seen him lately, when he confirmed in our Church." I need not proceed further to recite the special pleadings of the place in question;—*special pleadings*, you will, I think, be disposed to pronounce them, in more senses than one.†

The importance attached to apostolical succession may be perceived in the following quotations :—"Their principle," (that of the Fathers) "in short, was this: That the Holy Feast on our Saviour's sacrifice, which all confess to be 'generally necessary to salvation,' was intended by Him to be constantly conveyed through the hands of commissioned persons. Except therefore we can show such a warrant, we cannot be sure that our hands convey the sacrifice; we cannot be sure that souls worthily prepared, receiving the bread which we break, and the cup of blessing which we bless, are partakers of the Body and Blood of CHRIST." Again, "Herein is the difference between the ministry of such persons as have received this commission from the bishop, and of those who have not received it;—that to the former CHRIST has promised that His presence shall remain, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world;' and that when they

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 1. pp. 2, 3.

† Oxf. Tr. No. 10, p. 4.

minister the Word and Sacraments (which are the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven), what they do upon earth, in His name, according to His will, shall be ratified and made good in Heaven. ‘Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.’ But to those who have not received the commission, our LORD has given no such promise. A person not commissioned from the bishop, may use the words of Baptism, and sprinkle or bathe with the water, *on earth*, but there is no promise from CHRIST, that such a man shall admit souls to the *Kingdom of Heaven*. A person not commissioned may break bread, and pour out wine, and pretend to give the LORD’s Supper, but it can afford no comfort to any to receive it at his hands, because there is no warrant from CHRIST to lead communicants to suppose that while he does so here *on earth*, they will be partakers of the SAVIOUR’S *heavenly* Body and Blood. And as for the person himself, who takes upon himself without warrant to minister in holy things, he is all the while treading in the footsteps of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whose awful punishment you read of in the book of Numbers.—It is of the utmost importance that you should know and understand that it is by virtue of this commission, that we clergymen lay claim to your attention, when we minister the Word and the Sacraments.”\*

From these passages you may form some judgment of the argument by which this lofty claim is sustained. Those texts are first adduced which convey authority to the apostles themselves,—that authority is said to be permanently lodged in the Church, and the promise is quoted which assures the apostles of their Master’s presence “to the end of the world;”—it is then argued that the apostles live to claim the promise, and that their office is transmitted, in the line of all those ministers who have been episcopally ordained. I would have presented you with passages to this purport, but the argument is so attenuated, that while its length forbids quotation, its force by no means entitles it to any detailed examination.

This is the claim on which we are now to discourse. If well founded, it gives an awful authority to the parties entitled to it; while it proves all others who pretend to holy office to be profane intruders, and shakes all confidence in their ministrations. But if not well founded, it is an assumption which it would be painful accurately to designate, while it pours contempt on a ministry, which may possibly have the seal of divine sanction stamped upon it. To me, and to you, my hearers, the question is one of too serious a nature, to be contemplated without anxiety,—and yet the claim is one that carries so much of erroneous assumption and invidious temper in its very aspect, that it might seem scarcely deserving

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 4, p. 2. & No. 35, pp. 2, 3. The *capitals* and *italics* are those of the writers themselves.

of serious refutation. Let us proceed with the examination of it in the spirit of devout solicitude for Divine influence, that truths too obvious for doubt and hesitation may be luminously stated, may be discussed in the spirit of the gospel, and may be effectually applied by the grace of God.

I. I remark that the proof of this lofty claim, viewed as a question of fact, is very inadequate.

This is a question very summarily dismissed by the claimants. "As to the *fact* of the Apostolic succession," they say, "*i. e.* that our present Bishops are the heirs and representatives of the Apostles by successive transmission of the prerogative of being so, this is too notorious, to require proof."\* The obligation of proof rests, of course, on the assertors of the claim; nor can we admit so grave a claim, on the simple assertion, how often soever repeated, that the notoriety of the proof supersedes the necessity of adducing it.

To establish the claim, three things are indispensable:—the line of succession must be unbroken; rightful transmission must be satisfactorily demonstrated; and the successional character of the apostolate must be shown. Now in all these, the evidence appears to us incomplete;—in every one of them, the case seems to break down.

The very first link in the chain of connexion between apostles and those who claim succession to them, is doubtful; and detached from that first link, the whole chain falls of course. The apostle Peter is said to be that primary link, from whom Linus bishop of Rome received office. But, though it is allowed that Peter was martyred at Rome, his immediate relation to that church is by no means clear. It is obvious that he was not its founder; or surely some reference to so interesting a fact would appear in the epistle addressed to it by the apostle Paul. If not the founder, its first stated functionaries were undoubtedly appointed prior to his visit to Rome; and so its primary bishop could not receive authority from him. But the chain itself is entangled, broken, and too uncertain for the proof of inheritance. It remains to be shown whether Linus or Clement was the immediate successor of the apostles; and if appeal be made to the fathers, Tertullian and Jerome will be found at issue on the question. Were this settled, another difficulty presents itself as to those who stand next in succession: it is to be shown whether Cletus and Anacletus were two succeeding bishops, or two names of the same bishop; and since the latter will be probably conceded, it must be explained how the same functionary, under different names, was at once the predecessor and the successor of Clement. But even could the succession of the earlier bishops be satisfactorily proved, to what a dilemma are the modern claimants reduced, when in process of ages, two rival popes are seen, each claiming St. Peter's chair,—the one

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 7, p. 2.

retiring to Avignon, and the other presiding in the seven-hilled city! How can I be sure that the true heir of the tiara obtained his right? I have no need, then, to adduce other doubts, first, of a succession vitiated by its transmission through the papal channel; and then of a disruption when the Anglican Church broke off from Rome.—But, while the Oxford divines rest the claim of ordination grace on succession derived from the apostle Peter, and transmitted through the bishops of Rome; there may be others, who, wishing to rid themselves of this dependence, would trace the orders of the priesthood by different lines. If derived from Peter, or from Peter and Paul, who are alleged to have presided jointly over the church at Rome, they would contend that various branches ramified from the primitive stem, and that orders may have been received through their medium, without papal contamination. But this would require evidence of unbroken succession in all the different lines; the register of every diocese, through whose episcopate the line diverged, must be produced and accredited. And if a distinct line, even up to apostolic times, be claimed, it may be demanded, where is the church which can produce a genealogical table, having any pretensions comparable even with the unsatisfactory genealogy of Rome? A separate apostolical origin has been indeed claimed for the British church: but delightful as it would be to persuade oneself that the feet of the apostle Paul once trod the soil of Britain, and that he was the founder of the British Church,—neither vague tradition, nor the testimony of Gildas, nor the pleadings of the learned Burgess, furnish even a strong presumption, much less satisfactory proof, that the Apostle of the Gentiles ever reached our shores; while the learned prelate himself admits that the apostle's "appointment of Aristobulus, as the first bishop in Britain," is still less amply attested. But if this chain did not, like the other, fail in its very first links, it would be very difficult for the Anglican clergy to suspend from it their claims: first, the British church was driven before the pagan Saxons into the remote districts of Wales; then came Austin as a missionary from Rome to proselyte our Saxon ancestry,—and though a protest was raised against Romish innovation by the British church then existing in exile, it would be far easier to trace the orders now existing in the English church to the innovating missionary, and so to Rome,—than to the church professing to derive its origin from the labours of the Apostle Paul in our own island.

To substantiate this claim, not only must there be proof of regular succession, but also of rightful transmission. It is not every lineal descendent that is rightful heir. Even the Independent Pastor, were he eager to establish this kind of connexion with apostles, might trace his orders to the same source as the loftiest hierarch; and the character of an episcopate, regularly derived from the apostles, has actually been claimed for the associated presbyters of the Scotch church. But the claim of

apostolical succession is usually based on the doctrine of a threefold sacred function, the highest being that of the bishop, of whose office it is said that *superintendence* is the mere accident, while he holds apostolic power, by which he authorizes inferior ministers to become his delegates. Hence the right of ordination is utterly denied to presbyters; and it is said, "the Presbyterian Ministers have assumed a power, which was never entrusted to them. They have presumed," it is added, "to exercise the power of ordination, and to perpetuate a succession of ministers, without having received a commission to do so." But for bishops is claimed the title of "Commissioned Ordainers."\* Now if it can be shown that the threefold order of the ministry is without foundation in the New Testament,—that the Apostles never instituted a distinct class of commissioned Ordainers,—and that the very office of the episcopate, through which alone orders are said to be transmitted, was subsequent to the apostolic age; the validity of the claim must fall to the ground. The right of transmission should, in such a case, be above all doubt; but how small the evidence of a scriptural or apostolical origin of the office for which that right is claimed, will appear in a future stage of the argument.

A third grand prerequisite is essential to the proof of the claim in question,—it must be shown that the apostolate was successional. This we shall find occasion ere long to dispute. In the mean while we may marvel at the facility with which a successional character is admitted. It is assumed that the permanent benefit of the apostolate can only be transmitted by a line of successors;—and then, the absence of all those personal opportunities by which the twelve were constituted ocular witnesses of Christ, the want of a personal commission as immediately delegated by him, their own disclaimer of all inspiration, and the cessation of miracle to accredit the apostolic claim,—are all passed over as bringing no doubt on the question.

I do not stop further to examine these points. It is obvious that all of them should be so clear, that, in any court, the right of inheritance might be maintained. In a case to which the claimants attach such awful consequences, a doubt would be most distracting. If in one narrow channel, by which all that is sacred and saving is to be conveyed, there be a single interruption,—or if in its course there be two or more doubtful cases of divergence,—then by possibility our world may be left in desolation, the stream having been absorbed; or our race, in inextricable perplexity, the healing and the poisonous waters being altogether undistinguishable. If sacred office must become extinct without genealogical succession, the tree should be perfect, or sacred functions may be impossible; then the ministry, the sacraments, devotion, church-being, regeneration, hope, salvation, may be all a grand delusion. Is this the rock on which the church

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 7, p. 2.

was to be built, and against which the gates of hell were not to prevail? Oh! if office were thus to have been transmitted, the apostle, in writing to Timothy and Titus, ought, above all things, to have defined the commencement, and to have given strict charge, for the preservation, of correct genealogies, that the apostolic succession might never be lost! But did he give such a charge? No, thus he wrote to the former,—“ Charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith :” and thus to the latter,—“ Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings; for they are unprofitable and vain.”\*

II. I observe that the claim of apostolical succession brings the claimants of the Anglican church into perilous rivalry with those of the Papal community.

It is admitted by the Protestant claimants of apostolical succession, that the apostolical commission was given in common to all the twelve, that the Saviour's promise applied to them all, and that they all possessed equally the right of transmitting their power to their successors. Any line, then, that could be traced up to the hands of James, or Matthias, or Paul, would hold the rights of succession. No such line can be adduced. How singular that only *one* line has been preserved! and that every proof of apostolical succession resolves itself into proof of a succession transmitted through the See of Rome, and derived from the apostle Peter! The Oxford Tracts proceed unhesitatingly on this admission; this is the appeal which they present,—“ Every link in the chain is known from St. Peter to our present Metropolitans.”† Claim, as they may, the power of the keys for all the twelve, their writers acknowledge that they have received it solely at the hands of him, for whom the Papal clergy claim supremacy. Whatever the theory, the practical vicariat is obviously given to him, the inheritance of whose chair is claimed by the Roman Pontiff.

This argument would apply, were the Roman and Anglican lines collateral from the very commencement of the history; but a nearer kindred

\* “ Since the apostolic age seventeen centuries have rolled away; exactly eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the delivery of Christ's recorded promise; and blessed be God, the church is with us still. \* \* A regular unbroken succession has preserved among us ministers of God, whose authority to confer the gifts of his Spirit is derived originally from the laying on of the hands of the apostles themselves. \* \* Nor even though we may admit that many of those who formed the connecting links of this holy chain were themselves unworthy of the high charge reposed in them, can this furnish us with any solid ground for doubting or denying their power to exercise that legitimate authority with which they were duly invested. \* \* And be it remembered that the apostolic powers, if not transmitted through these, in some instances, corrupt channels, have not been transmitted to our times at all. Unless then we acknowledge the reality of such transmission, we must admit that the church which Christ founded is no longer to be found upon the earth, and that the promise of his protection, so far from being available to the end of the world, is forgotten and out of date already.”—Oxf. Tr. No. 5, pp. 9, 10, 11.

† Oxf. Tr. No. 7, p. 4.

obtains. The Anglican clergy trace their orders lineally, through a succession of Romish hierarchs, to the apostles' days. Not only did our forefathers, the Anglo-Saxons of the sixth century, receive the apostle and founder of their church as a missionary from the Roman Pontiff, but he was instated as the first archbishop of Canterbury by Gregory the Great. Succeeding ages witnessed the introduction of other prelates and primates, who received their orders confessedly from the Pope. Immediate kindred was acknowledged to the very day of the Reformation; and then, only three centuries ago, the line of the British clergy diverged finally from that of Rome. An awkward dilemma ensues:—either the secession was a violent disruption from the true church; or the Romish church had already forfeited its claims, and, with them, the validity of rightful inheritance, prior to the secession. It is painful to observe, how the partizans of succession, perplexed by this difficulty, endeavour to evade its force. They put it hypothetically,—“I will not altogether deny,” says one of them, “that a ministerial body might become so plainly apostate, as to lose its privilege of ordination.” At the same time it is contended that,—“the English church did *not* revolt (at the Reformation) from those who in that day had authority by succession from the apostles. The church then by its proper rulers and officers reformed itself.” And “the people of England, in casting off the Pope, but obeyed and concurred in the acts of their own spiritual superiors, and committed no schism.” But whilst the fear of one horn of the dilemma is thus obviously betrayed, an apprehension of the other is not less obviously evinced: observe the attempt to evade its force,—“But it may be said, on the other hand, that if we do not admit ourselves to be heretic, we necessarily must accuse the Romanists of being such; and that therefore on our own ground, we have really no valid orders as having received them from an heretical church. True, Rome is heretical now; nay, grant she has thereby forfeited her orders; yet at least she was not heretical in the primitive ages. If she has apostatized, it was at the Council of Trent.”\* So that it seems, had the English Reformation been postponed a very few years longer, it would have been too late to secure valid orders for the clergy; and yet the fact that the Romanists did not lose their church character till they entered into covenant with Antichrist at the Council of Trent, leaves the Anglican church, which had previously separated from Rome, in the awkward predicament of schismatic dismemberment from a true church.

But I ascend to a more general principle. If apostolical succession be the ground on which ministerial authority and church-being rest, how shall it be shewn that the Romish church has forfeited either? The grace of ordination has been regularly transmitted; the promise of the Saviour's

\* Ox. Tr. No. 15 *passim*.

perpetual presence is not abrogated; the ordained party is the representative of Christ:—what can invalidate, and who shall dispute, claims so awful? Such are the misgivings of the Anglican successors to the orders imparted by St. Peter's representatives, that a peculiar tenderness is ever manifested when the case is hypothetically put,—whether there may not be a possible loss of ordination grace through heresy? There is moreover something like a horror of the very name of Protestant. We are told that ultra-Protestantism is the error of the times; and that a second Reformation is needed, not to carry out the principles of the early Reformers, but to carry us back nearer to Rome. King Edward favoured a more Protestant doctrine than the first Reformers, obliterating prayers for the dead from the Prayer-Book; and lowering the tone, and diminishing the ceremonial, with which the oblation of the elements in the Lord's Supper had been made. Queen Mary opportunely checked the progress of reforms, which were, it seems, prompted by the school of Geneva. Listen to a new protest by a son of the Anglican church,—“ I like foreign interference as little from Geneva as from Rome. Geneva at least never converted a part of England from heathenism, nor could lay claim to patriarchal authority over it. Why could we not be let alone, and suffered to reform ourselves?” Listen again to the same oracle,—“ The glory of the English church is, that—it lies *between* the (so called) Reformers and the Romanists.”\*

Who shall decide the momentous question of rightful inheritance? Here, at least, the church *must* lay aside her tone of authority, and appeal to the judgment and conscience of the people. If the grace of ordination be transmitted through a rightful channel from the apostles, have Rome and England both retained their inheritance? and if so, which claims your allegiance? Or, if one has forfeited it, in what does the forfeiture consist? in false doctrine, or schism? Whichever it be, again the question returns, who is to decide the point of faith? the laic without the church? for the church is a litigant,—and the previous inquiry is, which is the church? But I will not further press difficulties so obvious. *Our* churches have no such vexatious dispute to adjust; and I trust, and fervently pray, that those members of the Anglican establishment, of whom the Oxford divines speak as ultra-Protestant, may not be fascinated by so perplexing a figment as apostolic succession.

III. The claim of apostolical succession involves a usurpation of the rights of God and of conscience.

The claim proceeds not on a simple appeal to scripture; it depends upon the testimony of history and tradition. Let it not be said that, in this respect, the case is parallel with that of the scripture canon. It is the sophistry of Rome, which, reasoning in a circle, argues that scripture

is first received on the authority of that Church, whose claims are afterwards to be brought to the test of scripture. In reference to the canon, we cite the evidence of history, simply as to certain questions of fact, viz. that the sacred books existed in the days of the apostles, that they were received by the primitive disciples, and that they were written by the parties by whom they purport to have been written ;—and then the whole canon rests securely upon its own independent and superabundant evidence, as a miraculously attested revelation from God. History and tradition must fulfil a very different office in attesting an apostolic succession. Historic evidence has, in the two cases, objects altogether diverse. Scripture is permanent ; the ministry is successive. Show the validity of the canon, as consisting of the several writings of apostolic men,—and no more is demanded : but the continuity of the apostolic succession must be proved in regard to the whole series ; and in regard to the whole series of every several line. Innumerable as the links of the several series necessarily must be, so many are the distinct facts for the attestation of which history and tradition are to be cited. Could it be proved out of the scriptures that the Lord Jésus had constituted a permanent apostolate in the world, the question of succession must be one of genealogy and of learning. The history of eighteen centuries must be read. The dark traditions of the early ages must be collected together. The question of right must be adjusted between litigating claimants. The unlearned inquirer would be left in distracting doubt,—or he must receive the ministry on the authority of those who hold it.

But waiving this previous question, I wish to show how serious a usurpation is involved in the claim itself, as it professes to invest the ministry with a mystic character of sanctity. This mystic character is something which even the apostles did not claim for themselves. They were witnesses of Christ's resurrection ; they were his inspired messengers ; they acted under the immediate direction of his Spirit ; their commission was accredited by miracle wrought by themselves, and miraculous endowments imparted to others by the laying on of their hands. Yet they claimed no authority excepting as Christ spake in them by the Spirit of Inspiration,—they professed to be the mere instruments of sovereign grace, not authoritatively imparting spiritual blessing, but made the instruments of a divine efficiency. They could say in the language of our text,—“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?” A much loftier thing is “the grace of ordination,” claimed, as emanating from them, by their professed successors. These, indeed, make no pretensions to inspiration, and work no miracle ; it is not essential that they should be men of pre-eminent piety, talent is not indispensable, even intention may be utterly wanting in the ministerial act ; yet there is a mystic character pertaining to them which is indelible :

they are far more than ministers by whom you believe, they represent Christ, they embody the church, they wield the power of heaven. Should an apostle appear, his miracles would accredit his claim of inspiration; speaking by inspiration I should know that Christ speaks in him, and that in receiving him, I am receiving his Master: but if a professed successor of an apostle appear, I see no miracle, I hear no claim of inspiration,—and yet he demands of me a reverence of somewhat which he calls sacred character: his piety may not exceed that of the mere laic; his whole service may consist in mere rites; the effects wrought by him are wholly invisible; what then is this something? this indelible character? this mystic power? It is not an intelligible, it is not a physical power! Its operation is undiscernible by the observer, and imperceptible to the functionary himself! O, I am afraid that brow is inscribed with those significant letters MYSTERY, and that that form is shrouding itself amid the deep shadows, and enthroning itself on a usurped seat, “in the temple of God.”

After the discussions of the previous discourse, I need not enter at large into that particular aspect of the case, in which sacramental efficacy appears amid the claims of the priesthood.\* Suffice it to remind you, that the doctrine of sacramental efficacy presupposes this claim of priestly power; and that, since positive institutes are supposed to act, not as significant symbols, but as ordained means of conveying grace, their efficacy, consists not in faith and holy dispositions excited in the participant, but they derive

\* The following extract will show that I impute no more to the doctrine than is matter of admission and claim with those that hold it:—“Ordination, or, as it is called in the case of Bishops, Consecration, though it does not precisely come within our definition of a sacrament, is nevertheless a rite partaking, in a high degree, of the sacramental character, and it is by reference to the proper sacraments that its nature can be most satisfactorily illustrated.” (Oxf. Tr. No. 5, p. 10.) Hence a certain and exclusive validity is attributed to those services in which the clergy officiate:—“The church is very particular in not allowing any administration of the sacraments or any *public* service of ALMIGHTY GOD to take place, except when there is one of her ministers to guide and take the lead in the solemnity. Thus not only in the administration of Baptism, and of the LORD’s Supper, but in the daily Morning and Evening Prayers, in the Public Catechizing of Children, in the Solemnization of Marriage, in the Visitation of the Sick, and in the Burial of the Dead;—in all these cases the Christian congregation is never supposed complete, nor the service perfect, unless there be also present a minister authorized to lead the devotions of the people.” (No. 12, p. 6.) Again,—“I suppose no man of common sense thinks himself entitled to set about teaching religion, administering Baptism and the LORD’s Supper, and taking care of the souls of other people, unless he has in *some way* been called to undertake the office. Now, as religion is a business between every man’s own conscience and GOD ALMIGHTY, no man can have any right to interfere in the religious concerns of another with the authority of a teacher, unless he is able to show, that GOD has in *some way* called and sent him to do so. It is true, that we may as *friends* encourage and instruct each other with the consent of both parties; but this is something very different from the office of a Minister of religion, who is entitled and called to exhort, rebuke, and rule, with all authority, as well as love and humility.” (No. 15, p. 2.)

it from the orderly administration of the minister. Hence we are told, (and the authors have caused the sentence to be emblazoned, so to speak, in capitals,) that the community claiming this right is. "THE ONLY CHURCH IN THIS REALM WHICH HAS A RIGHT TO BE QUITE SURE THAT SHE HAS THE LORD'S BODY TO GIVE TO HIS PEOPLE."\* I will adduce one additional example of the importance attached to this mystic priesthood regarded as embodying the church,—“Christ hath appointed the church as the only way unto eternal life—Christ never appointed two ways to heaven; nor did he build a church to save some, and make another institution for other men's salvation: ‘There is no other name under heaven given unto men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of JESUS;’ and that is no otherwise given under heaven than in the Church.”†

This passage leads me to another point to which I am anxious particularly to direct your attention,—the *authority* claimed by the church, regarded as embodied in the ministry. This is an authority involving, as it seems to me, a usurpation of divine power, and exercising its dominion over the consciences of men. The word of God demands implicit faith. When once an accredited revelation is brought to us, our understandings are to be bowed to its discoveries, our consciences are bound by its requirements. But any power that steps in and demands authoritatively to interpret that revelation, and to bind conscience by its interpretation, usurps the place of the God of revelation, and imposes a burden on human conscience. The church of Rome claimed this office, but pretended to infallibility in its administration; the Anglican divines claim it for their church, without pretending to offer her that indispensable prerequisite of its exercise,—infallibility. Thus they speak,—“A branch of Christ's church is domiciled among us, and claims over us, while acting according to His Spirit, the delegated authority of her Founder. She makes no pretensions to that immediate inspiration of the Spirit, which, by positively securing her ministers from error, would clothe her decisions with absolute infallibility. She puts the Bible into the hand of every member of her communion, and calls upon him to believe nothing as necessary to salvation which shall not appear, upon mature examination, to be set down therein, or at least to be capable of being proved thereby; but showing, at the same time, her authority as its appointed interpreter, she cautions him not rashly, or without having fully weighed the subject, to dissent from her expositions, the results of the accumulated learning and labour of centuries.”‡ With what jealousy the great principle of scripture authority is regarded, may be seen in every discussion. That great master principle, that primary element of Protestantism, now familiar as the elementary characters of our mother tongue, first distinctly enunciated by Chillingworth, (the *great* Chilling-

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 4, p. 5.

† Oxf. Tr. No. 51, p. 12.

‡ No. 5, p. 3.

worth was, it seems, a misnomer,)—that axiomatic truth, at once asserting the rights of, and exerting a supreme authority over, conscience; that prime truth,—“The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants;” has come to be coldly looked upon, to be regarded with jealousy, if not to be wholly controverted by Protestant claimants of apostolical powers. Thus they speak,—“The question of the rule of faith is an abstract one to men in general: true, the intelligible argument of ultra-Protestantism may be taken, and we may say, ‘The Bible, and nothing but the Bible,’ but this is an unthankful rejection of another great gift, equally from God, such as no true Anglican can tolerate.” They then go on to state it as “the sounder view, that the Bible is the *record* of necessary truth, or of matters of faith, and the Church Catholic’s tradition is the *interpreter* of it.”\* Again, “Every system of theology has its dangers, its tendencies towards evil. Now let us ask, what are the bad *tendencies* of Protestantism? At the Reformation the authority of the Church was discarded by the spirit then predominant among Protestants, and Scripture was considered as the sole document both for ascertaining and proving our faith.” When it is “urged, that we Protestants believe the *Scriptures* to contain the whole rule of duty,” it is replied, “certainly not; they constitute a rule of *faith*, not a rule of *practice*; a rule of *doctrine*, not a rule of *conduct* or *discipline*.” And this is the special pleading by which the bold denial is bolstered up,—“Where (e. g.) are we told in Scripture that gambling is wrong? or again, suicide?”†

Well may they demur to the designation of Protestant! The spirit of free inquiry, the habit of scripture appeal, the demand of inspired authority, are little congenial with the pretensions of apostolical succession. But it is too late to rivet anew the yoke of priestly domination. For a time, the high-sounding claim of apostolic character may awe the minds of some; but when they discover that claims are made on faith and conscience, which are not to be sustained without appealing to the varying testimony of tradi-

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 71, p. 8.

† I add another passage from those “Tracts for the Times,” entitled “Records of the Church.” It appears as a note in No. xxv., p. 8.

“This warning is especially seasonable to us of this day, who are beset both with the clamour, that ‘the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants,’ and with a thousand discordant views, all professedly Scriptural, in illustration of its unreasonableness. We may simply say, that interpretation shall be ours, which the Church has ever taught from the first day until now. The whole body of saints, speaking unanimously, must be sounder and more certain in their doctrines, than any of these upstart and self-authorised parties. If it be objected, that the Church Catholic at this day speaks different things, we may plainly deny this as regards the great points of faith, as above stated. Whatever be our private differences with the Roman Catholics, we may join with them in condemning Socinians, Baptists, Independents, Quakers, and the like. But God forbid, that we should ally ourselves with the offspring of heresy and schism, in our contest with any branches of the Holy Church, which maintain the foundation, whatever may be their incidental corruptions!”

tion, to the sealed writings of the fathers, and to the mystic authority of the church,—the fetters in which the public mind had in the hour of slumber and fascination allowed itself to be bound, will be snapped as tow with the fire. Above all, let but their own doctrine of Divine Incarnation and Atonement be proclaimed; and the Spirit of God, descending with his own truth, will waken up a Sampson's strength, to break away, though with the pin of the beam, or the gates of the city,—and the poor bondsman will become transformed into a champion of truth. Yes, even though the eyes of that poor bondsman should be put out, grace shall transform him into a Nazarite to the Lord, and his strength shall bring down the pillars of that structure of error and superstition; the structure of Apostolic succession must crumble at the touch of scriptural faith.

IV. We object, further, against the claim of apostolical succession, as fallacious in principle,—inasmuch as it proceeds on a mistaken notion of the true characteristics of an apostolic ministry and an apostolic church.

We have seen an imposing claim advanced; and we have seen that the proof of that claim is defective, that it brings the parties who advance it into a perilous dilemma in reference to the Romanists, and that it involves a serious usurpation of sacred rights. Are we, then, to forego all idea of discovering, among existing communities, the tokens of apostolic character? Is the fine conception of an apostolic church, superintended by an apostolic ministry, a mere figment? Did the apostles live only for their own age, and must we go now darkling down to the extreme verge of time? In reply to these questions, it may be shown, by adducing a few great principles, that no such alternative follows, on the rejection of the vaunted claim of succession.

1. We argue that apostolical authority abides in the Scriptures of the New Testament,—comprising the instructions of Apostles therein preserved, and their acts therein recorded.

The apostolate was an office in part incapable of transmission; in part the necessity of transmission was superseded; and in part it involved functions which are common to all the ministers of the gospel. The cases of Matthias and of the apostle of the Gentiles prove, that to have seen the Lord Jesus, and so to be his personal witnesses, was indispensable to the apostolate; in this respect there can be no succession. The apostles were also commissioned ambassadors of the Lord Jesus; and for this office they were immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost, whilst miracles attested their inspiration, and accredited their commission: and it is not denied that inspiration ceased with the lives of the twelve. As the first heralds of the gospel, authoritatively proclaiming its overtures and moulding its institutions, it was their privilege to found the Christian church; their names are on the twelve foundations of the city: but here again the privilege was special and personal, “other foundation can no man lay.” But though the

Apostles themselves were not suffered to continue by reason of death, and though in these respects there could be no transmission of their apostolate, all the benefits of their personal and official labours are perpetuated. Their testimony has been faithfully borne, was miraculously attested, and became permanently recorded. We have the fruits of their inspiration; they were employed to complete the volume of scripture, and have left it to us sealed with the impress of their apostolic authority. Their official acts, as founders of the church, have a character of authoritative precedent, demanding of us that we should keep the ordinances as delivered to us by them. What need is there of succession in such a case? and where are the characters of apostleship in those who claim the right of succession? They profess no inspiration, they work no miracle,—and what apostolic authority can they exert? Even on their own showing, the inquirer must make final appeal to the writings of the New Testament. *They* claim apostolic authority; so do *we*: but they first require you to trace their right of inheritance by regular succession; and when this is established, they grant that heresy may involve a forfeiture of the inheritance,—and so you must bring their orthodoxy to the test of scripture: we direct you at once, without any intermediate steps, to that test.

Particular passages may be adduced, of which explanations will be demanded that shall harmonize with these views. Our Lord's commission to the twelve, and his promise of perpetual presence with them; the power of the keys imparted by him, and that of binding and loosing; his memorable words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" his declaration, that "as his Father had sent him, so he sent them;"—these and a few others are the scripture appeals on which principal stress is laid. As the passages in question referred to the Apostles personally, they were verified in their inspiration, their authoritative commission, and their successful labours; the authority which, by their special inspiration, they were commissioned to wield, survives in their inspired writings. As they referred to those offices of instruction and discipline, which were to be discharged not only by themselves, but by all the succession of faithful ministers in common with the Apostles,—they still furnish the directory and encouragement of the church. To select a single example,—the power of binding and loosing: we recognise that power in the dread authority of the truth which they have left on record, by whatever lips that truth may be enunciated; and we recognise it in the holy discipline of the church, when executed in conformity with their authoritative word. Should any say, 'Verify the apostolic authority in this ministry received, through episcopal hands, lineally from the twelve,—verify it in these consecrated structures, and this ground hallowed by episcopal benediction;' we will rejoin, 'Verify apostolic authority in doctrines deduced immediately from the New Testament, in observances enjoined in the New Testament, in a discipline instituted in the New Testament.'

2. The apostolic model of church order may be found in those Christian communities, whose constitution and offices are conformable with apostolic practice and prescription.

The definition of "the true Church," by the advocates for apostolic succession, is, that it is "that Christian body—governed by men commissioned by the Apostles."\* The definition, supplied in the 19th Article of their own church, includes no such limitation,—“The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.” By consulting the Apostolic records, we find the latter definition confirmed,—whilst some additional facts discover themselves. The early converts of the gospel were incorporated into societies in the several scenes in which they were gathered; each of these was designated *a church*, and the several communities were distinguished by a plural designation, as *churches*. A more comprehensive use of the appellative occurs, by which it was applied to the whole body of believers. What, then, was the model of an apostolic church? Its constituents were believing and holy men; they were incorporated in society; they assembled in one place for the observance of divine ordinances; they exercised mutual control and enjoyed mutual fellowship; they were under law to Christ. Every such church possessed the power of receiving or rejecting members; the associated members administered the discipline of holy law; they elected officers according to a divine appointment. They were INDEPENDENT, not as “opposed to and independent of all ecclesiastical government;”† but

\* Oxford Tr., No. 29, p. 8. A subsequent passage in the same Tract applies the test to the Christian communities of this land:—“What, if by the good Providence of God, the line which began with the Apostles Peter and Paul should have continued even to this very day? so that there are men who stand in the place of the holy Saints and Martyrs of Scripture up to this very hour, under the great and eternal Head of the Church? You look surprised, but such is the fact; and if such persons do really exist, and if we find one community of Christians acknowledging, and obeying, and ruled by them, while every other body of professing Christians in our island disclaims and rejects them, you will see that this test will enable the most simple-minded and unlearned person to discriminate between the true Church of CHRIST and the unauthorised sects which call themselves CHRIST’s followers now, almost as clearly as he could, had he lived in the days of the Apostles themselves.

\* \* \* The body of Christians which reverences and is guided by the successors of the Apostles must be the true Church of CHRIST. But who are these successors of the Apostles in our country? \* \* \* The Bishops of the Church of England are they.” p. 10.

† The following are extracts of a tract purporting to contain “An account of Religious Sects in England.” Under the head of “*Those who receive and teach a part, but not the whole of the truth*, erring in respect of one or more fundamental doctrines,” \* \* \* they name “INDEPENDENTS, so called from being opposed to and *independent of all ecclesiastical government*.” \* \* \* They afterwards add, “these three” (Presbyterians, Independents, and Methodists,) “do not receive or teach the truth respecting the doctrine of ‘laying on of hands,’ which St. Paul classes among the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and by which the Christian ministry receives its commission and authority to administer the word and sacraments. For

as acknowledging no external human control: they received the law of Christ at the mouth of his Apostles, and yielded obedience to their respective spiritual functionaries, appointed to superintend the several churches according to divine institution.

It is universally acknowledged that, besides the apostolate itself, there were two other offices constituted in the primitive church. All parties admit that the deacons were elected, primarily for the administration of pecuniary affairs; and all admit that a second office consisted in the pastorate of particular flocks, and that the pastors were called sometimes bishops or overseers, sometimes presbyters or elders. We conceive these to be the only permanent offices of the Christian church, whilst Episcopalians contend for a threefold order of ministry. Of the advocates of a third, and a superior permanent degree, some view it simply as an office of superintendence,—not admitting the claim of sacramental character and a perpetuated apostolate; but the sacramentarians maintain that it is the channel of ordination grace. In examining the model of apostolic appointment, the twelve appear to us to have occupied a special position, in which there could be no succession to them; but in the place of appeal to their living authority, the churches of all succeeding ages have a final appeal in their inspired writings. Many other gifts enjoyed by the primitive church were likewise extraordinary, and having, by miraculous attestation, and special inspiration, answered the purposes for which they were bestowed, they were also withdrawn. Evangelists were employed in introducing the gospel to new regions, and setting in order the churches gathered; these would not be required, when the organization of the churches was completed: such appear to have been the official characters of Timothy and Titus, with the superaddition probably of extraordinary gifts; and we have a correspondent class of functionaries, though undistinguished by any extraordinary endowments, in our modern missionaries. In enumerating the gifts bestowed by the ascended Saviour, the inspired Paul specifies “apostles,” the inspired ambassadors of Christ; “prophets,” a class obviously restricted to the period of miracle; “evangelists,” whose sphere was that of the missionary; and “pastors and teachers,” officers whose combined duties were the superintendence and instruction of the flock. That every church was complete in its organization when furnished with the two orders of functionaries, pastor and deacon, we may gather from the apostle’s address to the Philippians—“to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” That these two were to constitute the permanent officers of the church, for whose direction it was

they one and all reject the first (i. e. the apostolic, or, as we now call it, episcopal) order of clergy, who exercised that rite according to the New Testament, and without which there is no warrant from Scripture for believing that the Clergy can be appointed, or the sacraments duly administered.” (Oxford Tracts, No. 36.)

important that inspired instruction should be supplied for all coming time, we may infer from the fact that these are the two special classes of officers, whose qualifications and duties are minutely enforced in the first epistle to Timothy. And that the primitive pastors did not receive orders from any exclusive class of superior ministers commissioned by the apostles, is obvious, inasmuch as they themselves, the presbytery, are referred to as an ordaining body. Of the right of presbyters to exercise an ordaining power, there seems to be a tacit acknowledgment, moreover, in the ordination to priest's orders in the English Church,—for one or more priests cooperate with the bishop in the imposition of hands.\* Even this cursory glance at the subject may

\* Should the reader wish to see a specimen of the arguments by which the Oxford divines maintain the doctrine of a threefold order of clergy, he may find one in the reasonings put into the mouth of a shrewd peasant whose abode is fixed in this vicinity; the parochial priest is the narrator, and it will be seen how far he was from being startled by the singular logic of his parishioner:—

"Now, Sir," (Richard Nelson is the speaker,) "it seems to me evident, \* \* that there were certainly in the Church, *as far as the Testament history reaches*, three different ranks or orders of Ministers, one above the other." "It is plainly so," I said. "But," said he, "there is one point that rather perplexed me, and I was some time before I could make out such an explanation of it as was satisfactory to myself." "What was that," I asked. "Why," said he, "it was this. I considered that any person to whom the Apostles granted apostolical authority, (Timothy, for instance,) was from that time higher than a Presbyter or Bishop, and yet could not properly be called an Apostle. What then could he be called? I at last remembered a place in Bishop Wilson's little book, which led me to reflect, that surely as there were Angels, (whether it might mean guardians, or heavenly messengers, or missionary Bishops, as we might say,) of the seven Churches in Asia,—so Timothy might have been called the Angel of the Ephesian Church; and Titus, of the Church of Crete; and the same in other cases. And it came into my thoughts, that, perhaps, after St. John's decease, whether out of humility, or because, (the Churches being settled,) the ministers need no longer be missionaries, the title of Apostles or Angels was laid aside, and that of Bishops limited to the highest of the three orders. Thus I seemed to myself every where to have traced the threefold order, down from the beginning of the Gospel; the authority and distinction peculiar to each being preserved, a difference in name only taking place.

Thus at first they were ..... Apostles, Elders, Deacons.

After the decease of some of the Apostles, or at least

while St. John was yet living..... Angels, Bishops, Deacons.

At some period after St. John's decease ..... Bishops, Priests, Deacons.'

"I do not see how what you have said can be contradicted," I replied. "But," he proceeded, "there is one thing I must, Sir, confess to you, and it is this;—that I have often said to myself, what a comfort it would be, if it had pleased God to preserve to us some few writings of the good men who lived close after the Apostles, that so we might have known their opinion on matters of this kind: and we might have known, too, by what names *they* distinguished the different orders of Ministers, one from another. For surely what they would think most proper in such cases, must be the safest of all rules for us to follow; unless (which is a thing not to be supposed,) *their* rules should be contrary to those of the Apostles, as set down in scripture. So, Sir, I have often thought, if any such writings could be found, what a precious treasure they would be." "What," said I, "Richard, did you never hear of those who are called the Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius?" \* \* "The kind Providence of God has permitted some of the writings of these good men to be preserved to this day." (Oxf. Tr. No. 12, pp. 10, 11, 12.)

suffice to show that we are not without reasons for limiting church office to two permanent orders. Many and varied attestations might be adduced to sustain this opinion. I am happy to mention one, furnished by the pen of a learned layman of the episcopal church, an ornament to the mercantile community of this town. I refer to a work on "the Doctrinal Errors of the Early Fathers,"—a work of no small merit and utility, but one in which there is a singular discrepancy between the evidence so ably elicited in the body of the volume, and the verdict pronounced in its conclusion. Mr. Osburn says, of a certain passage in the epistle of Clement—"It recognises two degrees of rank only for ecclesiastical persons; the one named indifferently bishops (overseers) and elders, the other deacons or ministers. That bishops and deacons were the only orders known in the apostolic churches is also evident; the epistle to the Philippians is superscribed to the saints which are in that city, with the bishops and deacons."\*

If of the three orders of clergy, the first be acknowledged as the sole channel of ordination grace,—and if that order, notwithstanding, cannot be shown to be of Divine institution,—the claim of succession necessarily falls to the ground. It might be enough, then, to object against the inadequacy of the evidence, by which so grave a claim is supported; in such a case, scarcely less than full demonstration could be demanded. But even supposing that the institution of a threefold order were admitted, appeal might be made to the enlightened conscience, whether it is not far more in accordance with the genius of the New Testament, to look for the impress of apostolic character, in the conformity of institutions to an apostolic model, than in the mystic grace of ordination. The Episcopalian, quite as much as the Presbyterian, or the Independent, may be expected to appeal to the authority of New Testament scripture, much rather than to rights transmitted through successive ages. While those who claim these rights are exclaiming,—“I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas;” it may be enough to rejoin, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?”

3. A more important characteristic of an apostolic church and ministry remains to be considered,—that which may be recognised in the exhibition of evangelical truth and holiness.

I am not disposed to admit that the moulding of Christian institutions has been left to expediency; still less can I grant that human authority is to decide the question of ecclesiastical polity. I hold that a very exact model of church order is to be found in the New Testament, and that this model authoritatively demands to be adopted by Christian communities. Yet, conceiving that every religious institution has been ordained for the conservation and extension of truth and piety,—I cannot but regard truth and

\* Pp. 168, 9.

piety as occupying a place of far higher importance than external institutions; they must be of as much more importance than the mere model of church order, as the end is more important than the means. Looking upon all models and every orderly arrangement as subservient to evangelical and spiritual religion,—I recognise with delight an apostolic character in every devoted minister of the gospel. Let him come with episcopal sanction, let him be ordained by the presbytery, or let him go forth as the occasional preacher of the village,—I revere his holy principles and devout character, I love the truth he preaches, and I rejoice in his success. And so likewise, where I find private individuals, or communities with whom “Christ is all and in all,” who practise holiness, who are accepted of Christ,—I hail a brotherhood,—I recognise a Christian church,—and I am ready to reciprocate cordial fellowship. Here is the true apostolical character—according with scripture, assimilating churches of varied outward model, bringing into fellowship with primitive times, blessing this sad world, making meet for heaven, sharing the ministration of angels, recognised by the Lord Jesus.

V. A last allegation lying against the claim of apostolical succession is a serious practical one, arising out of the arrogant bearing, and schismatic spirit, of which it is the occasion.

The disjoining of party from party, the breaking up of the church universal into sections, is to be lamented; but it is delightful to see mutual love rising above party distinction. Sometimes the beautiful spectacle is seen of interchanging service, and sometimes of common fellowship at the Lord's Table. Mutual attachment is expressed by mutual respect and good will. Conscience is respected in others, as its rights are vindicated to ourselves. But how unlovely the partizanship which claims for itself exclusive conscience and sanctity,—which, though primary truths be held, and Christian graces be exercised, and holy deportment be maintained, and the glory of God be studied, can see no Christianity, can admit no church being, can own no brotherhood. It is painful to say, such is the arrogance of them that claim to be successors of the apostles,—and that this is the consequence of the claim. They may be amiable, courteous, social; they may exercise all the personal charities: but they have adopted an exclusive theory, and they look coolly on your Christian character, however unblameable, however exemplary, however distinguished by scripture graces. They profess “the warmest charity;” and tell you the dissenter “may be saved;” but though he believe in Christ, love Christ, obey Christ to the best of his convictions of duty, they leave him to uncovenanted mercies, and teach their own flock that they are “far safer in the covenanted church of God.” Is not this very like the arrogant scorn which teaches the community to cry, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the

temple of the Lord, are we;" and instructs its members to give the proud rebuff, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou."\*

Think of the wide bearings of this coolness and this contempt. Search the whole population through, and see piety in the several departments of human life, high and low; see it in the various graces and activities of Christian conduct; see it in the several conditions of prosperity and adversity; see it amid the pains of sickness and in the crisis of death:—but it is found in connexion with sects destitute of episcopal ordination, and it all passes for very vanity; more than half the worshippers of the population are unchurched. Extend your views to other lands—see the Lutheran and the Reformed—the Presbyterian churches of North Britain and the continent—and the Congregationalists and Methodists and Baptists of the New World: they hold the Head, they give proofs of spiritual religion, they are truly devout, their religion sustains them in life and

\* The following sentiments are avowed in "A Farewell Sermon addressed to the Parishioners of Whitchurch, Salop, by the Rev. W. Sinclair, A.M.;" the newly appointed Incumbent of St. George's Church, Leeds.

"And lastly, in the present days of laxity and spiritual insubordination, when the claims of an apostolic ministry are so generally overlooked, and I may even add, so ignorantly and superciliously derided, I have ventured to assert from time to time the unpalatable truth, that the Divine warnings against the sin of schism can by no human authority or popular agreement be antiquated and abolished; that Christians now are bound as much as Christians in the days of St. Paul, to continue in the *Apostles' fellowship*, as well as in the *Apostles' doctrine*, not forming themselves into new communions upon new principles, or heaping unto themselves teachers of their own appointment, but adhering conscientiously to the one great evangelical communion,—the Church universal,—which was founded upon the day of Pentecost, which has been perpetuated ever since by a succession of apostolic pastors, and against which, according to our Saviour's never-failing promise, *the gates of hell shall not prevail*. But I intreat you to remember, that in this my object has been purely defensive,—not to condemn others, but to secure you. The warmest charity for Dissenters is quite consistent with an unalterable assurance, that ours is the true fold of Christ; and a persuasion, that in spite of their errors of opinion, they may be saved, is quite compatible with the conviction, that every error is dangerous, and that you are far safer within the pale of the covenanted Church of God."—pp. 11, 12.

Another example may be adduced from the Tracts:—"Do you not suppose that there are multitudes both among clergy and laity at the present day, who disparage, not indeed CHRIST's merits, but the sacraments He has appointed? and if so, is not their error so far the same in kind as that of the Romish Church—the preferring Abana and Pharpar to the waters of Jordan? Take the Sacrament of Baptism. Have not some denominations of schismatics *invented* a rite of dedication instead of Baptism? and do not Churchmen find themselves under the temptation of countenancing this papist-like presumption?—Again, there is a well-known sect, which denies both Baptism and the Lord's Supper. A Churchman must believe its members to be altogether *external* to the fold of CHRIST. Whatever benevolent works they may be able to show, still, if we receive the Church's doctrine concerning the means 'generally necessary to salvation,' we must consider such persons to be mere heathens, except in knowledge. Now would there not be an outcry raised, as if I were uncharitable, did I refuse the rites of burial to such an one?"—(Oxf. Tr. No. 41, Via Media No. II.)

death :—but they have no apostolical succession, and the Anglican will not own kindred.—Take a wider range ;—see the poor Chinese pondering Morison's version of the Bible, the Chieftain Tzatzoe preaching to his Caffres, the people of Rarotonga hailing the return of their missionary Williams ; see teeming converts on the sea and on the continent—idols are cast away—the savage beast becomes a lamb—sacred song swells on the ocean breeze, and prayer ascends on the spicy Indian gale :—but the apostolical succession is wanting—Morison could convey no grace, Tzatzoe is an intruder into sacred things, Williams has converted Rarotonga and a hundred other islands to an uncovenanted church, the convert is not regenerate by baptism, nor can he be in the kingdom of heaven,—the praise and the prayer reach not to heaven. Rise higher—and see the doubtful state of departed spirits. Owen, Howe, and Baxter were schismatic ; no bishop imparted to Bunyan the grace of ordination ; the most that can be said of Doddridge and Watts is that they *may* have been saved ; the honoured names of Bogue and Waugh have lost their halo of brightness :—retire, ye spirits, before the men on whom episcopal hands have been laid ! ye were but ministers by whom hundreds believed, and thousands were instructed,—but these have imparted the grace of the sacraments !

And what shall be said to the check put upon works of faith and labours of love ? Shall one who has only received the imposition of the presbytery's hands,—much more shall one whom no hands have set apart,—most of all shall a mechanic presume to warn or instruct a soul,—visit a cottage,—whisper evangelical blessings by a deathbed ? What ! shall *any* man speak of pardon to a lost sinner,—presume to pray for a departing soul,—strive to pluck the guilty from the burning ? These inquiries need neither reply nor comment.

In conclusion—with you, my hearers, I assume the tone of apostolical authority—not of my own, but that of these inspired ambassadors ; they bind you over, if impenitent and unbelieving, under curse ; they lock the gates of glory against the unholy and neglecters of the great salvation ; but they invite you by faith to Jesus, they speak of broken fetters, they beckon you to enter the gate of the heavenly city—they stand and cry, “ We are ambassadors for Christ—as though God did beseech ye by us, we pray ye in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled unto God.”

# LECTURE III.

## ON THE UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

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LUKE XX. 25.

“AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, RENDER THEREFORE UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS WHICH BE CÆSAR’S, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS WHICH BE GOD’S.”

EVERY period has its particular questions on which the public mind is divided, and in the discussion of which the public mind is apt to become exasperated. One of the most absorbing questions of our own day, is that of national religious establishments; and as it affects at once this world’s politics and the interests of religion, it is not surprising that it should excite vehement feeling: its discussion naturally provokes the fierceness of political partizanship, and kindles the warmth of polemical controversy. Under such circumstances the love of peace produces a disinclination to approach the subject, and the tender conscience indulges no small apprehension of injury through the excitement of unholy passions; and even those who have no natural indisposition for the arena of argumentative conflict, and whose stern love of truth forbids the sacrifice of its least iota even for the sake of peace with all its amenities,—even they will feel jealous of motive and of aim, and, shrinking with the dread of being betrayed into unholy temper, will not enter into discussion without much watchfulness and prayer.

The avowal of objection against the principle of an establishment, has been charged upon us as “wanton and unprovoked aggression;” malignant hostility to the episcopal church has been imputed to us; and all fellowship, even in objects common to the friends of revelation and christianity, has been, in many instances, practically withdrawn, and, in not a few, strongly denounced. Instead of indulging the indignation, which honourable minds, conscious of upright intention, might be allowed, under such circumstances, to breathe,—let us content ourselves with a strong disclaimer of unkindly feeling. It is surely no difficult thing to discriminate between objection

against the principle of an establishment, and hostility against the body established by civil law. The great proportion of those who object most earnestly against the union of church and state, entertain the most cherished attachment to the doctrines exhibited in the articles and confessions of the English and Scottish establishments; they love the men who, in those establishments, preach the doctrines of their respective formularies, and live under their influence; and they exult in the success of their ministry, when they see sinners converted to God, and holiness and spirituality wrought in their characters. And in their intercourse with such as prefer the forms of the episcopal church to the simpler rites of dissenting communities, it not unfrequently happens that those who are proscribed by the prejudice—and it would not be too much to say, by the unkindness—of good men in the established church, recommend attendance on the ministry of the very individuals by whom they are so proscribed. We disavow all malignant hostility. Although we *cannot* forego principle, and *will not* shrink from its avowal through the dread of unkind imputation, we wish carefully to guard against all bitterness of spirit; and should a rash word of ours wound the mind of any good man, we are willing to offer the meekest apology, to confess with grief the irritation betrayed by it, and, without recanting the truth which we advocate, to revoke the expression that wounded christian charity.

In calling your attention to the question of the union of church and state, I have selected as a motto the words wherewith our Lord silenced the men who would fain have ensnared him by bringing into opposition the claims of Cæsar and of God. His answer comes with the authority of Incarnate Wisdom; it clearly discriminates between the classes of duties which we owe as the subjects of human and divine government; and it involves the grand principles on the ground of which we object against religious establishments.

In entering on this subject I am placed somewhat at disadvantage,—having within the last few months committed to the public eye a discourse on the question. That discourse contained the leading arguments which seemed to me at the time calculated to command the convictions of the candid inquirer; and on a review of them I do not perceive that they have lost their force. But, as I could not be satisfied to retrace the same ground, I must endeavour now to put the matter in some other form, and shall perhaps lose the advantage not only of some of the more popular, but also of some of the most weighty, reasons of dissent.

In passing from the subjects of the two lectures which have already occupied us, I find myself in a new position in reference to the Oxford divines. In discoursing on sacramental efficacy and apostolical succession, I was under the necessity of objecting against their views. On the question of this evening, it would be difficult to say whether they incline

more in favour of the affirmative or the negative. Denouncing innovation, they yet ask for a second reform of their church. Advocates for passive obedience, they yet utter loud complaints of state interference, and talk of solemn protests against the measures adopted in reference to the church. I might almost content myself with adducing their own objections, were there not others which seem to us of no small force, and which they adduce not. They complain of state interference, and protest against it as an abuse; I must argue against the alliance in its very principle.

It would not be easy, probably, exactly to define what is meant by the union of church and state; and were the definition asked, there are many who would, after warmly advocating its propriety, betray but a vague conception of its meaning. The very terms under which the matter is expressed might indicate the uncertainty of the public mind. It is at one time an alliance between church and state, and at another it is a union of church and state; the question remains, therefore, to be decided, whether these are two diverse bodies entering into affinity, or whether they are two elements blending in the same body. We hear again of the state religion, and the national church; are we to understand that the Establishment is, then, the formal organ by which government avows its christianity, or the ecclesiastical system which comprises within its pale the mass of the population? Or is the established church, simply the selected community, which the state adopts as the organ of christianizing the nation?

In conducting the inquiries of this evening, I shall avail myself of the various phases, if they may not rather be designated, the diversities of substantive form, under which a state religion is exhibited,—and shall endeavour to shew, that, viewed in what aspect soever, or embodied in what form soever, it is inconsistent with the New Testament.

I. We object against the union of church and state, as involving an incongruity, and tending to mutual injury.

It is not necessary that I should labour to present you with a nicely accurate definition of these two appellatives, church and state. Little more is requisite at present than to say that the latter is an incorporation for civil, and the former for religious, purposes. The constituents of the state are united together for the mutual protection of social rights, subject to powers, however modified, whose office it is to legislate for the good of the community, and to administer its laws. Government is a divine institution: here is its authority,—“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God:” and here is the purpose for which it is constituted,—“Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil: wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good: but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath

upon him that doeth evil:”—and here again is the obligation imposed,—“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience’ sake: for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing: render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”\*—The constituents of the church are united together for the conservation of truth, for the worship of God, and for the manifestation of his glory in the world; and suitable institutes and ordinances are appointed for these purposes: the following are the descriptive statements of their character and objects,—“Ye as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”†

As these two incorporations are constituted for such different ends, so they employ instruments as different for the accomplishment of their respective objects: the magistracy is armed with the sword; but “we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of *our* warfare are not carnal, but mighty *through God* to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”‡ The state administers law, by coercing refractory spirits, and inflicting civil penalties: the church addresses itself to conviction and the heart; it pronounces none but spiritual censures; and it inflicts no penalties but such as involve a suspension or forfeiture of religious privileges.

These two distinct incorporations, with their separate aims and correspondent institutions, may be found coexisting within the same geographical limits; they may both comprehend a large number of the same constituents; and it is possible to conceive of them as identical in their constituency, the whole of the incorporated members of the state being also incorporated members of the church. Now the question arises, whether it would subserve the interests of either, or of both, in any of these cases, to enter into alliance, or to amalgamate themselves in one united corporation; and we deny the compatibility of any such alliance or union,—we object against it as calculated for mutual injury,—and we regard it as contrary to the New Testament.

Take the case of an entire mutual incorporation, in which the state shall be the same as the church, and the church as the state,—and we do not deny that there is something plausible and imposing in the conception; and we are aware that analogies may be found, and scripture precedents pleaded,

\* Rom. xiii. 1—7. † 1 Pet. ii. 5 & 9. ‡ 2 Cor. x. 3—5.

for the amalgamation. The patriarchates were domestic governments, in which the common progenitor was at once the Ruler and the Priest of the family. The Israelites were at once a civil and a sacred incorporation; the nation constituted the visible church of God, and the government was a theocracy. Modern nations have assumed somewhat of a theocratic character,—pronouncing the king God's anointed, giving him at once the supremacy in the state and the headship in the church, providing by tithe and rate for the support of worship, and vesting excommunication in the civil power and giving it the character of a civil forfeiture. But the question may reasonably be asked, are the cases of ancient patriarchates and of national Israel, parallel with those of modern nations? or are they so far analagous, as to be admissible in the form of precedent? And still more may it be asked, is there nothing in the character of the New Testament economy that prohibits their adoption as precedents? If patriarchates be alleged—then, to prove them to be precedents, it must be shown that civil governments do stand in the position of domestic heads; and, above all, that they are authorized depositaries of the divine oracles. Or if we be referred to Israel, we must demand again the divine model of organization, providing at once for all the interests of church and state. Israel could say, “The Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our judge.” The law of Moses settled in perpetuity the whole polity, civil and ecclesiastical; and modern legislative bodies must produce the evidence of inspiration before they can establish a right to prescribe, or enforce laws for the regulation of religious affairs. The executive in Israel, whether it were Judge, or King, or Priest, merely administered divine law; war was undertaken, commerce was restricted, geographical boundaries were marked out, by divine authority: modern governments pretend to no such powers,—unless we except Rome, parcelling out undiscovered regions, and giving to adventurers and banditti the right of territory, on condition of ecclesiastical subjection. So completely was the Israelitish magistrate the administrator of God's law,—that the breach of the sabbath was to be visited by him with death; and so completely was his administration supported by divinity, that miraculous interposition enforced his authority. Since no claims like these can be laid to the character of a theocracy by any modern nation, and since the church and state are not one, but two incorporations, the conception of an identification cannot be entertained.

But utterly to remove the power of adducing the Israelitish system as a precedent, and to show on the highest authority the contrast between the kingdom of Christ, and that theocratic kingdom, I shall adduce our Lord's confession—a confession often adduced in the controversy, and unanswerably decisive in this particular bearing. Under the theocracy of Israel, the subjects of the great King were employed as champions and soldiers, to fight his battles; he literally taught their “hands to war” and their “fingers

to fight:" the kingdom thus established, and thus maintained, was a kingdom of this world. But Jesus declared at the tribunal of Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."\* The Israelitish kingdom was one for which its subjects fought with the sword,—had Jesus come to set up a similar kingdom, his subjects would also have fought for him: but since he utterly disclaimed such an auxiliary, the theocracy of Israel can never be drawn into a precedent, in reference to the kingdom of Christ.

But the inquiry still remains,—if the two incorporations cannot coalesce, and become one, may they not enter into alliance for mutual support? And here our reply is unhesitating,—the union would be a grand incongruity, and mutual injury must be the result.

Suppose the balance between the confederated incorporations to be most exactly preserved,—and what adaptation is there in the instruments of the one to the aims of the other? Shall the state ask the church for her spiritual censures as a penalty for state offences, or employ her ministers to preach of civil claims and rights? or shall the church ask of the state her imperial purple, to add dignity to the doctrines of divine incarnation and mediation, and to the worship of the infinite Jehovah,—or employ the sword of the magistracy to enforce the overtures of mercy, or to execute the anathemas of discipline? But the nice balance supposed can never be preserved: in an alliance of church and state, the one must become the creature of the other. For a long series of ages the state was held in subordination, when emperors stood at the stirrup of popes; and when kings, that had granted charters of liberty to their subjects, saw their kingdoms laid under interdict by lordly ecclesiastics. The balance has now shifted, and political authority is in our day usurped over the church, which, in entering into alliance with the state, forfeited its liberty.

I may in this place adduce the lugubrious complaint of the Oxford divines: thus they speak:—"The 'union of Church and State,' which many persons so call, and are so anxious to preserve, is in some points almost as great an evil, as it is confessedly in other points a good: and there are almost as many persons who support it for its bad points, as there are who hate it for its good. The union of Church and State—as now enforced by the law of the land—consists in two things, STATE PROTECTION and STATE INTERFERENCE." They seem at a loss to determine whether the gain of the one is not counterbalanced by the loss of the other, especially since "recent changes in the constitution have now so entirely altered the mutual relations of the Church and the Legislature." Four things are enumerated, (but the enumeration is, I conceive, by no means


\* John xviii. 36.

complete,) in which state protection consists; and even these will appear to you singularly enough arranged under the category of mere protection. To secure to it the endowments that are claimed as its property; to raise a tax for the repair of its structures; to allow thirty bishops a place among the peers of the realm; and to imprison such as are under sentence of excommunication, are the four things. The last of the four is denounced; and the first, admitting the claim of propriety in the said endowments, is but the protection of civil rights. As to the other two, to arrange the enforcement of church rates under the head of protection, is, I say, not a little singular; and to give thirty ecclesiastics a place among the peers, is not merely to secure protection, but to give to the church a power in civil legislation. It is no wonder that the right is guarded by a counterbalancing control; if the state grants the church such an influence, it is reasonable that it should preserve to itself a check upon that influence. The Oxford divines thus put the case:—"The Bishops, every one of them, are, as a matter of fact, appointed by the Prime Minister for the time being, who, since the repeal of the Test Act, may be an avowed Socinian, or even Atheist." A similar patronage is complained of in reference to "a very large proportion of other church benefices, likewise in the hands of the Prime Minister, or of the Lord Chancellor, and other lay patrons, who, like him, may be of any or no religion." Similar complaints are made in respect to discipline, the administration of which is said to be prevented by certain persecuting laws.\* Though these complaints are uttered with a disavowal of any present wish for change, yet no small impatience of state-control is betrayed. That impatience would be perfectly reasonable, were the church willing to forego, with the disadvantages, the supposed benefits, of state alliance: but while it receives taxes enforced by the laws of the state, and accepts the power of legislation, it has no right to complain of the checks by which its influence is restrained. The complaint ought to induce inquiry as to the expediency of a union between two such diverse incorporations.

It is indeed alleged that the incongruity has arisen out of those changes which have taken place in consequence of recent laws: the case is thus put in one of the tracts,—“When the church, with an unprecedented confidence, bound herself hand and foot, and made herself over to the civil power, in order to escape the Pope, she did not expect that infidels (as it has lately been hinted) would be suffered to have the absolute disposal of the crown patronage.”† Could the church have expected to enter into

\* Oxf. Tr. No. 59.

† Oxf. Tr. No. 41. I subjoin one or two fuller extracts, that the reader may see how strongly the Oxford divines express themselves on the subject:—

“Are we content to be accounted the mere creation of the State, as schoolmasters and teachers may be, or soldiers, or magistrates, or other public officers? Did the State make us? can it unmake us? can it send out missionaries? can it arrange dioceses? Surely all these  spiritual functions; and laymen may as well set about preaching, and consecrating

alliance with the state, without experiencing, as well as exerting, control? Was it wise; was it scriptural, was it rational, for the church ever to bind herself hand and foot, and make herself over to the civil power? Were there never any "*baptized* infidels" found administering the affairs of state, when as yet test laws were unrepealed? Was Walpole, with the sacramental cup at his lips, a purer man than Wellington, who repealed the Test Act? or Grey, who took office after its repeal? Was the Eighth Henry, that redoubted Defender of the Faith,—or the Second Charles, beneath whose pious sway the Test Acts were enacted,—was each of these so saintly, that a good churchman was never likely to startle at the claim of homage, as to the head of the church?

That men who persuade themselves that, through the grace of ordination, they can at their pleasure impart the merits of Christ to such as are willing to submit to sacramental tests, should have consented to acknowledge a minister of state as the dispenser of mitres and cures, is, after all, not so surprising, as that evangelical, spiritual members of the episcopal church, should not be startled by the practical incongruity, and secularizing influence of state patronage. Can they be contented to see those episcopal dignities which involve superintendence over the whole clergy, dispensed by the prime minister? Are they not startled by the perception that political party is the prime consideration,—and that the tone of the bench of bishops is estimated, according to the number of appointments that may have fallen to the administration? Can they be contented to see a large proportion of

the Bread and Wine, as assume these. I do not say the guilt is equal; but that, if the latter is guilt, the former is. Would St. Paul, with his good will, have suffered the Roman power to appoint Timothy, Bishop of Miletus, as well as Ephesus? Would Timothy at such a bidding have undertaken the charge? Is not the notion of such an order, such an obedience, absurd? Yet has it not been realized in what has lately happened? For in what is the English State at present different from the Roman formerly? Neither can be accounted members of the church of CHRIST. No one can say the British Legislature is in our communion, or that its members are necessarily even Christians. What pretence then has it for, not merely advising, but superseding the Ecclesiastical Power?" No. 2, p. 2.

"—It is obvious that the efficiency of the church must ever mainly depend on the character of the Bishops and Clergy; and that any laws which facilitate the intrusion of unfit persons into such stations must be in the highest degree prejudicial. The appointment of our Bishops, and of those who are to undertake the cure of souls, is a trust on which so much depends, that it is difficult to be too cautious as to the hands in which it is placed, and as to the checks with which its due execution is guarded. The sole object which should be kept in view is the getting those offices well filled, and the fewer private interests which are allowed to interfere in filling them the better. Yet what are the laws which are forced on the acceptance of the Church for regulating this important matter? What is the care that has been taken to put the appointment in proper hands? with what *checks* is its due execution guarded? What attention has been paid to any one point except the very last that should have been thought of, the private interests of patrons? It cannot be denied that at present it (the Church) is treated far more arbitrarily, and is more completely at the mercy of the chance government of the day, than ever our forefathers were under the worst tyranny of the worst times." No. 59, pp. 3 and 6.

England's ten thousand parishes supplied with spiritual pastors, not by the voice of any class of churchmen, clerical or laic, but by the will of the crown, the patronage of wealth, and the hammer of the auctioneer? Can they be contented to see a band of trustees, composed of the elect of municipal bodies, or of the men whose wealth gives them influence, disposing of benefices which give clerical sway over many thousands; or of incumbencies, that fix, for life, the occupants of pulpits, erected in the midst of many thousands? Did good men in the church never sigh over the destitution of evangelical instruction, under which thousands of parochial communities suffer?—did they never groan under the power and oppression of prelates, whose mitres bore inscriptions of ambition?—and did it never occur to them to ask, whether much that occasioned the sigh and the groan, might not be attributed to state patronage?—and whether that patronage was not the inseparable consequence of state alliance? Did they never feel that such an alliance rendered the two classes of duty, owing to Cæsar and to God, incompatible with each other?

II. I proceed to a second view of the union of church and state,—that which exhibits a state religion as essential to the religious character of a nation;—and against this I object, as involving an estimate of religion equally debasing and fallacious.

The state is regarded as an abstraction, or it is, more properly speaking, personified; and so a religious, or an irreligious, character, is attributed to it. There was a time when its every functionary was required to qualify for office, by eating the sacramental bread: the prince communicated when he received the anointing oil; the minister of state was recognised as a member of the established church; the judge proceeded to the assizes from the altar; the magistrate qualified, the alderman qualified, the exciseman qualified, in the same way. Then came a change in the law: test and corporation acts were repealed, catholic emancipation followed, office was thrown open to dissenters as well as churchmen,—and a flaming zeal pronounced that our character as a religious nation was forfeited, that the state had, so far at least, renounced religion. Still the vestiges of a state religion are acknowledged to exist. The sovereign is not exonerated from the test; the state church still ministers to the incorporated agencies of government, if it does not enforce conformity on individual members; there is a chaplaincy in regular exercise in parliament; the municipal mace is borne only within episcopal walls; regiments are marched, amid martial music, to the observance of Sunday rites; the bishops' lawn gives a character of sanctity to the upper house of parliament; and the chaplain is appointed to serve the mariner in his voyage. Such are the elements of national religion. In former times the nation was, therefore, most religious; the citizen was, of necessity, a member of the established church, and not only was the alien from that establishment forbidden office, but his heretical teacher was banished to the

distance of five miles from the market town. A little relaxation followed, and the state tolerated dissenters,—allowed them to breathe the vital air, to eat the bread which they earned, to buy and sell in the market, to enjoy the protection of law. And now relaxed discipline gives to the alien from the state religion access into government offices, and into the magistracy, and into the legislature. At each step some element of national piety has, of course, been laid aside. Yet in the preservation of the Establishment, we are supposed to retain one, our sole, our last title, to religious character as a nation,—in that we have still a state religion.

Now what is the exact significance, and what is the real propriety of this convenient phrase,—a state religion? Is a state any other than an incorporation of men? Is it an abstraction, or is it an aggregation of individuals? Can the character of the state be any other than the character of the individuals constituting it? Is not religion a personal thing,—a matter of conviction, an influence on the dispositions of the heart, a sanctification of character and conduct,—and what can the religion of the state be, but the religion of the people constituting the state? A heathen nation is a nation of heathens; a Christian nation must be a nation of Christians,—a fine conception, but, I fear, never hitherto realized between any degrees of latitude, within any geographical boundaries.

The advocates of apostolic succession and sacramental efficacy may be perfectly consistent in *their* views of a state religion. If there be in Britain one only branch of the apostolic church,—if they have received by uninterrupted transmission the grace of ordination,—if they have the power of imparting the merits of Christ and the blessing of regeneracy by the sacraments,—then they could christianize a nation at the baptismal font, and diffuse around the candidate for office, though possibly profane and debauched, the odour of sanctity, by the communication of the Eucharist. In this case, religion not being a matter of conviction, nor of experience,—but a system of mystic efficacy and of ritual, a state religion might be easily maintained. But if, in previous lectures, the doctrine of sacramental efficacy has been shewn to be a delusion, and the claim of apostolical succession to be baseless, then this notion of a state religion cannot be maintained. With evangelical men far different views obtain. They at least will admit, that without faith, personal, enlightened, cordial faith in Christ, it is impossible to be saved,—that repentance is a heartfelt grief for sin,—that devotion must be the act and the habit of the inmost soul, that holiness of life must attest the reality of piety; and that in these consist religion. But can they persuade themselves that these are the elements of a state religion? Did tests secure even decent morality in the highest, or the humblest, functionaries of the state? Was the sacramental feast *honoured* by the approach of an irreligious man to qualify by its participation, or was it *desecrated*? Is religion more honoured when a municipal body proceed,

with the bauble of office borne at their head, to the scene of parochial worship, to pay an outward regard to religious rites, in which not a few of them evince no other interest,—or when the chief magistrate and his brother corporators go respectively to their several houses of prayer, to offer spiritual worship, and lose the recollection of office in the exercises of personal and social devotion? Will it be alleged that sacramental tests could secure to the departments of the state men truly religious? or will it be denied, that an equal amount, to say the least, of true religion, may be found where they are dispensed with? But I need not confine my appeal to evangelical men; I may fearlessly address it to all, except the mystics that suppose themselves endowed with sacramental character. Analyse the idea of state-religion: what is the religion of the sovereign, but repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? what is the religion of a parliament, but the piety and sanctity of the members composing it? what is the religion of magistracy, but the faith and holiness of the magistrates? what is the religion of a corporation, but the godliness of the individuals of which it consists? what is the religion of the army or navy, but the personal subjection and dedication to God of the soldiers and the sailors that are the constituents of both? what is national religion, but the religion of the nation, of the mass of the people?

If there is a fallacy in the notion of a state religion, I am afraid that there will be found no less debasement in it. If it be something different from the enlightened faith, the heartfelt devotion, and the personal holiness of the individuals who compose the state; if it may co-exist, as the religion of the community, with the irreligion of those who make up the community,—it must be a mere name, a show, a system of hollow rite. True religion implies the conviction of faith; a state religion is satisfied with the utterance of a creed. True religion inspires devotion, of which the external rite is the expression; a state religion prescribes the rite, and demands no more. True religion establishes its seat in the heart, and influences the life; a state religion is satisfied with the homage of profession. What is that state devotion, which employs a chaplain to commence the senatorial sittings with prayer, while no suppliants are convened? Surely as well might the beads be counted, or the Mongolian prayer machine be made to revolve. When corporations array their pomp, and regiments manœuvre in the house of God, if there be individual piety, it is irrespective of the scenic exhibition; and without personal piety, the proffered reverence of the associated company is but as sounding brass. Can the parties themselves fail to feel that religion is debased amid the parade of outward forms, and that its profession is a mask? and are they not in danger of despising all its realities, as a ceremonial and a mockery? Can the world look on, and fail to behold in such forms, a mummerly, which will probably be regarded as a substitute for all spiritual devotion? Will

angels flock with interest to gaze on the spectacle of state religion,—to see the evolutions of a sacred ceremonial? Was it for this that the volume of revelation was furnished? for this that the mediation of the Son of God was undertaken and effected? Was it for this that movements of eternal love were made in the high counsels of triune Godhead? Is it for this that the Holy Ghost condescends to visit the church below? and are these the fruits of his operation? Will Deity accept those acts and services, on which a state religion so imperatively insists as the grand tokens of piety towards God,—the rites of outward homage? Is he worshipped with men's hands? will he regard bodily service? "They that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

But I have another objection to allege: a state religion is not only a fallacy, and a debasing fallacy,—but it operates, I fear, as an instrument, in too many instances, of fearful delusion. Now let not these words be misapprehended,—as our views on this subject have but too frequently been misapprehended. Let it not be said that we attribute unmixed evil, universal evil, the exclusive causation of evil, to the operation of a state religion. Let it not be represented that we pronounce this the "horror of horrors," in comparison with which all "the atrocities" of crime "shrink into nothing." Yet though we deprecate misapprehension, we cannot fail to point out the destructive delusions consequent upon this fallacy. Have not millions lived and died under its influence, satisfied that, because they were observers of a state religion, they were subjects of religion itself? Is not the line of demarcation obscured, and are not the two grand classes, the religious and irreligious, hereby confounded? Is not the formal profession of a state religion the anodyne by which many a conscience is quieted? Does not Briton hereby become synonymous with Christian, just as Hindoo is with Heathen,—and are not many brought to view with complacency this distinction from the heathen, as saving and sanctifying? "They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their hearts that they cannot understand. He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

I must point out one other operation of a state religion: while it undertakes to impart the knowledge, and administer the rites of religion, to various departments dependent on the state, it demands attention to forms, and too obviously neglects the great objects of those forms; and not unfrequently prevents the access of voluntary zeal. The gaol, the barracks, the ship of war may furnish examples. One of the instances which has been already referred to may seem an excellent arrangement,—that by which the soldiery are marched to the service of the parochial church. Now I grant that all the moral influence of the officer should be employed to induce attendance on religious worship; but while I would claim for every man

the right of selecting a sanctuary for himself, I must object against all compulsory attendance, as calculated to defeat its end. Take a parallel case,—the workmen of the factory. Here I am strongly, painfully of opinion, that the moral influence of the master is not used as it ought to be. But with the requirement of attendance in one case, and the neglect even of persuasion in the other,—compare the regiment of a thousand men with the factory of a thousand people,—and among which will you find the larger proportion of real religion? The navy is professedly supplied with chaplains,—the effort of voluntary instruction is strictly forbidden,—the very tract, if given to the sailor, is ordered by his captain to be thrown overboard;—and with all these means what is the effect of state religion on the British sailor? Ah! when the state administers religion, far more likely is it to create place for the partizan, than to consult the spiritual good of the community! far more likely to throw an obstacle in the way of an enlightened zeal, than to furnish the adequate instrumentality of a nation's spiritual improvement!

III. A third view of the union of church and state is that, in which, from among the various systems of religion prevailing either without the boundaries of the nation, or within them, one is selected, adopted, and patronized by the state, which is therefore designated the Religion of the State; and against such selection and patronage we object, as being unwarranted, oppressive, and injurious.

What, in this case, must be the rule of selection? It will of course be replied, that the right system, the true system must be selected. So said Edward the Sixth, so said Queen Mary, so said her sister Elizabeth; but each patronized a different system: Edward's was, they tell you, ultra-Protestant; that of the elder sister was Popery; that of the younger, the strictest Episcopacy. So said Nebuchadnezzar, when he erected his golden image; and so said the present Queen of Madagascar, when she sent forth an edict to restore the gods of her forefathers, and martyred Rafaravavy, on the 14th of last August, for her adhesion to Christ. So says Frederick of Prussia, when he imposes a modified service-book for the merging of the Lutherans and the Reformed; and so says Austria, in establishing the Romish church. So says Britain, of Episcopacy in England; and, strange to tell, so says Britain of Presbyterianism in Scotland. Is a system of religion right, because it is established? or is it established, because it is right? If the latter, who is to be the judge? and what is the fitting authority by which the selection is to be made? Is it the Church itself,—the previous question is still undetermined, which is the Church? Is it the select few that constitute the government of the state? and are they peculiarly qualified to judge on points of theology, and do they always give adequate evidence of that personal piety which is the essential prerequisite of so grave a decision? Shall the question be determined by majorities

throughout the provinces? and have majorities never erred on questions of religion? There is no principle of selection that will bear examination. Religion owns no authority but that of Deity, appeals directly to conscience, and suffers no power to interpose between God and the conscience.

But it may be said, that if the grand peculiarities of truth be maintained, secondary questions should be forgotten for the sake of securing to some system of religion, substantially correct, the authority of the state. I grant the distinction between fundamental and secondary questions; but even fundamental truths may be denied by a government, and repudiated by the majority of a nation. Constantine was once orthodox, but he afterwards vacillated; his son Constantine was Arian, and Julian, the next in succession, became apostate; Valentinian and Valens reigned jointly, and the one befriended the Nicene faith, the other held to the Arian heresy. And, supposing that fundamental truths be maintained, if the selected system should perchance involve error on less important questions, whether in speculative divinity, or in discipline,—what is duty? to conform to a system involving such error, because it is established? or to dissent from it, though established, in consequence of error? Is fundamental truth to be received with man's appendages,—or as it is modified by Him who is the source of all truth? And if one may dissent, may not a thousand, or a million, or the majority of the nation? And shall that establishment be still enforced, and bear the name of the Religion of the State?

And if you allow the state to select a religion, which it shall patronize, and which shall be called the Religion of the State,—supposing also, that the majority of the people are disposed to coalesce in the selection, and to approve the patronage,—in what position is the dissentient placed? To him, the selection and patronage, so made in reference to another incorporation, is a disadvantage and an oppression. Why should he be taxed, (no matter how small the fraction,) for the support of a system against which his conscience demurs? Why should an invidious distinction be made, excluding his system from favour, when he is a loyal subject, and a conscientious religionist? Why should a soldiery which a common taxation supports, and a navy which derives wages from the customs charged on the merchandize of the dissentient, be fenced about, so that he may not bring that system of religion in appeal to their consciences which seems to him the purest, the most scriptural, and the most effectual? Why should the law brand his ministers, as “pretending to holy orders, or in pretended holy orders?”

Such a selection, connected with such a patronage, is objectionable, because it interferes with the simple operation of truth. Never is truth so likely to prevail against error, as when it is left to operate on the mind and conscience in the freest manner. The judgment is too easily warped, the depravity of the heart is ever ready to exert its warping influence; and if any external influence be allowed to act on the decisions, the issue is so much the

less likely to be in accordance with right. If then truth should be with the nonconforming body,—state patronage will act as a bribe in favour of error. And if truth should even be on the side of the established system, how much may its purer influence be damaged, by that extraneous influence, which, instead of leaving it to work conviction, appeals not less to the passions than to the understanding! The majesty of truth herself may be obscured amid the pomp and gorgeousness in which she is arrayed!

That the religion selected and patronized by the state will be adopted by multitudes, not on conviction, but because it is the religion of the state, is too obvious to need any laboured proof. But I wish to point out two other consequences, arising out of state selection and patronage, which are both of great practical importance.

Unhallowed associations will be one of these consequences. Can the sixteen thousand clergymen of the Established Church hold fellowship with one another? Are there not, acknowledgedly, varieties of opinion obtaining among them, which separate them to the very extremes of theological doctrine? and are the differences of character less extreme? Can a bishop convene the clergy of his diocese for some solemn act of fellowship, without bringing into association those, whose diversities of sentiment extend to vital truths, and whose rule of conduct varies, from the utmost strictness, to real latitudinarianism? Shall not pulpit be arrayed against pulpit, while yet the respective occupants are ministers of the same church, meeting at the same visitation, and assisting at the same service? Nay, shall not the walls that echoed in the morning to the glad tidings of salvation by faith, reverberate in the afternoon to the dissonant tones of salvation by sacraments? O, it is a coalition dishonourable to truth, incompatible with fellowship, delusive to souls! But it is a coalition arising out of the principle of an establishment. Were truth the simple question, were spiritual religion the simple aim, were systems left to their own unfettered energies,—such a coalition would never be witnessed.

There is an influence, operating in the opposite direction, quite as much to be deprecated,—the selection of a religious system as a state religion is productive of schism. I do not now speak, as I might do, of the schism whereby the establishment has driven from its communion all whose consciences demur at certain subscriptions, and rites,—refusing a comprehension, aggrieving Puritans, excluding nonconformists, demanding an *ex animo* assent to every dogma and every ceremony of the church. But I speak of the schismatic bearing, whereby the establishment holds itself aloof from orthodox and godly men of other churches. It is not a matter of wonder, that men claiming the mystic character of apostolic function, aries, should stand aloof; but that men who acknowledge faith in Christ, holiness of life, and spirituality of mind, to constitute the essence of religion,—for them to hold themselves aloof, where these are confessed to exist,

is for a wonder and a lamentation. Their Lord bought these believing men, whom they despise, with his blood; their bodies the Holy Ghost transforms into temples of his own indwelling; heavenly mansions are in course of preparation for them:—and yet they will not own them as brethren, will not join them in any common work of zeal, will not mingle in any act of devotion. Established churches are the only communities, professing to hold the same great evangelical doctrines, that systematically refuse the fellowship of interchanging services. Men that would have admitted to their pulpits a Hoadley, whom they brand as a Socinian; or a Sterne, whose pruriency the merest decency must loathe,—expelled from them an Oliver Heywood, and closed them against a Robert Hall. This cannot be in harmony with christian love, nor with christian truth. Here is a fence, which the great Head of all his true members cannot approve.

IV. We may view the union of church and state under yet another aspect;—assuming the selected community to be the true church, and supposing that it be allowed to operate by its own proper agency, it is argued that the aid of the state may give to its agency a wider, more vigorous, and more efficient influence. But we object against the acceptance of such aid, as not more unwarranted than it is unnecessary.

Two plausible arguments are advanced, in favour of aiding the progress of true religion, by the co-operation of the state. The first may be very summarily dismissed,—that since men should employ every talent in the service of truth and piety, the powers of the state constitute an important class of talent, to be made subservient to this object. It has been already shewn, that the state is an incorporation for a specific end, and that its instruments are not adapted to promote religion. You cannot make christians by law,—convince at the point of the bayonet,—induce spirituality by the prizes of secular office,—work repentance by the prison and the halter. But princes, statesmen, and magistrates may employ all the *moral* influence of their station, for the gospel. Their personal example, their expansive liberality, their active zeal may constitute them nursing fathers of the church. Another Solomon, without the imposition of a bishop's hands, might even preach from a throne of ivory—and his proclamation of the world's vanity would be most effective. There are legislators who return from parliamentary sessions to teach Sunday scholars,—and their zeal provokes many. Governors may spread the shield of their protection over persecuted missionaries, and so, without interfering with religion, may protect the person of its zealous advocates.

But a second argument turns upon the practical incompetency of other, and voluntary, means, to reach the necessities of the community: and rural districts are pointed out to us, as an example;—while the dependence of pastors on their people is deprecated, as destructive of boldness and usefulness.

Now in reply to this argument I might refer to the facts of church history. How was the gospel supported on its first promulgation, and during the early centuries of its progress? When all was one wide field of heathenism,—when the preacher met every where with persecution,—when the convert risked property and life; means were found to sustain the ministry and to support the worship of the church. Surely the vital energy of christianity is not exhausted. And since Constantine's day, what has been the real source of that support which the gospel has received in the form of pecuniary contribution? It was found necessary, at a very early period, to enact laws, not to enforce, but to restrain, contribution. Whence does the English church profess to have drawn those endowments which she claims as her property? From the voluntary contributions of a pious ancestry. Who built the cathedrals of our land? Ecclesiastics, with the funds which a voluntary zeal furnished them. And is voluntary zeal extinct? Crippled as it is by the existence of endowments,—and counteracted as it is by the endowed church,—it is actively and efficiently employed. It builds sanctuaries in every town and village; it supports many of its pastors, if not in opulence, yet with an honourable liberality; it supplies village evangelists with stipends, which, if far too small, would have satisfied apostles, and greatly exceed the official income of many a curate of the church endowed by the state; it erects structures, and contributes funds, for the purpose of training a rising ministry; it multiplies institutions for the visitation and evangelical instruction of the dwellers in our lanes, and courts, and alleys, institutions which the beneficiaries of an establishment think it worth while to denounce; it raises no inconsiderable contributions for the poorer members of voluntary churches; it stretches itself to regions beyond, takes the wide world for its field, shoots away to islands that commerce never visited, assails idolatry in its high places, and devotes annually some hundreds of thousands to the spiritual benefit of distant nations. Blot out all that state religion has done in the course of the last century from the history of the race on the one part; and on the other, blot out all that voluntary zeal has done: and which, think you, would leave the greatest blank? The state church of this country has, by its accredited society, furnished something less than half a dozen versions of the scriptures; voluntary zeal has, by the Bible Society, now proscribed and deserted by so many Churchmen, produced upwards of a hundred and fifty versions. A similar comparison might be made in the department of missions. Is the energy of voluntary zeal exhausted? Does it depend for efficiency on the aid of state provision?

As to the objection taken against the system of voluntary support, because it creates dependence in the ministry, I will read an extraordinary extract from the first of the Oxford Tracts, being an appeal to the clergy:—“ We know how miserable is the state of religious bodies not supported by the State. Look at the Dissenters on all sides of you, and you will see at

once that their ministers, depending simply upon the people, become the *creatures* of the people. Alas! can a greater evil befall Christians, than for their teachers to be guided by them, instead of guiding? How can we 'hold fast the form of sound words,' and 'keep that which is committed to our trust,' if our influence is to depend simply on our popularity? Is it not our very office to *oppose* the world,—can we then allow ourselves to *court* it? to preach smooth things and prophesy deceits? to make the way of life easy to the rich and indolent, and to bribe the humbler classes by excitements and strong intoxicating doctrine?" Say, Christian people, is this a correct representation of the relation in which your ministers stand to you, or of the course which they pursue? Do they seek your's, or you? Do they tamper with truth? Do they prophesy smooth things? Do they preach one doctrine to the rich, another to the poor? Do you expect it of them?—and if you did, though you should offer, as a bribe, thousands of gold and silver—would they not hurl the bribe from them, and rather give their tongues to be plucked out, than thus shamefully betray your interests, and their own souls, and their Master's honour? But why should *I* speak? That the ministers of Christ should depend, for carnal things, on those to whom they minister spiritual things, is the Lord's ordinance; and the scornful diatribe is an insult on that ordinance. It was an ordinance worthy of Incarnate Wisdom; and the minister who should abuse it to unfaithfulness, would be his own victim—the people would speedily leave him without support.

Here I close the course. I have raised a warning voice: its sound may not reach far, and its influence may be still more limited; but I could not be contented without appealing to the religious public, as far as they might be disposed to listen. I retire again to the sweet amenities of pastoral office, and to the hallowed duties of scripture exposition and evangelical overture. I have not lightly adopted the views of truth which I hold, and am ready at any time to argue as well as state them, to defend as well as assert them. But, having thus stated and argued the case in question, I leave it to work its influence on conviction and conscience.

In conclusion, let me remind those who hear me, that the three discourses which have been delivered, have all proceeded on the principle that religion is a personal thing,—a matter of conviction, faith, experience, practice. You have the consciousness of a personal being, and the sense of personal accountableness; you are sensible that you are sinful and burdened with guilt; a personal act of faith is indispensable, whereby you may commit your souls to the gracious care of the Lord Jesus; an inward, personal change of character and disposition is indispensable; a personal dedication of yourselves to holiness and God is demanded of you; in your own persons you must die, be judged, be for ever saved, or for ever lost. Verify the presence of your God, till holy shame and penitence be awakened. Verify

the Mediator, bearing the marks of death endured for sinners, meekly inviting you to be reconciled, ready at the first cry of your spirit to plead for your salvation. Verify the tribunal: again behold the Saviour. You are arraigned—have you fled to him for mercy? fly open ye gates of pearl! Have you neglected salvation? the gates of hell close on you for ever!

NOW UNTO THE KING ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, THE ONLY WISE GOD, BE HONOUR AND GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

